CLARISSA;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY:

COMPREHENDING THE

MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS

OF

PRIVATE LIFE;

AND

PARTICULARLY SHEWING THE DISTRESSES

THAT MAY ATTEND THE

MISCONDUCT

BOTH OF

PARENTS AND CHILDREN,

IN RELATION TO MARRIAGE.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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WITH THE LAST CORRECTIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

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THE HISTORY OF CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

St. Alban's, Monday night.

I Snatch a few moments while my beloved is retired [as I hope, to rest] to perform my promise. No pursuit—nor have I apprehensions of any; though I must make my charmer dread that there will be one.

And now, let me tell thee, that never was joy so complete as mine!—But let me inquire—is not the angel flown away?

* * *

O no! she is in the next apartment!—Securely mine!—Mine for ever!

O ecstasy!—My heart will burst my breast,
To leap into her bosom!

I knew that the whole stupid family were in a combination to do my business for me. I told thee

that they were all working for me, like so many under-ground moles; and still more blind than the moles are said to be, unknowing that they did so. I myself the director of their principal motions; which falling in with the malice of their little hearts they took to be all their own.

But did I say my joy was perfect?—O no!—It receives some abatement from my disgusted pride. For how can I endure to think that I owe more to her relations' persecutions than to her favour for me?—Or even, as far as I know, to her preference of me to another man?

But let me not indulge this thought. Were I to do so, it might cost my charmer dear. Let me rejoice that she has passed the Rubicon: that she cannot return: that, as I have ordered it, the flight will appear to the implacables to be altogether with her own consent: and that if I doubt her love, I can put her to trials as mortifying to her niceness as glorious to my pride.—For, let me tell thee, dearly as I love her, if I thought there was but the shadow of a doubt in her mind, whether she preferred me to any man living, I would show her no mercy.

Tuesday day-dawn.

But, on the wings of love, I fly to my charmer, who perhaps by this time is rising to encourage the tardy dawn. I have not slept a wink of the hour and half I lay down to invite sleep. It seems to me, that I am not so much body as to require such vulgar renovation.

But why, as in the chariot, as in the inn, at alighting, all heart-bursting grief, my dearest creature? So persecuted as thou wert persecuted!—So much in danger of the most abhorred compulsion!—Yet grief so *unsuspectedly* sincere for an escape so critical!—Take care—take care, O beloved of

my soul! for jealous is the heart in which love has erected a temple to thee.

Yet, it must be allowed, that such a sudden transition must affect her; must ice her over. When a little more used to her new situation; when her hurries are at an end; when she sees how religiously I shall observe all her INJUNCTIONS; she will undoubtedly have the gratitude to distinguish between the confinement she has escaped from and the liberty she has reason to rejoice in.

She comes!—She comes!—And the sun is just rising to attend her!—Adieu!—Be half as happy as I am (for all diffidences, like night-fogs before the sun, disperse at her approach) and, next to myself, thou wilt be the happiest man in the world.

LETTER II.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Wednesday, April 12.

I WILL pursue my melancholy story.

Being thus hurried to the chariot, it would have been to no purpose to have refused entering into it, had he not in my fright lifted me in, as he did: and it instantly drove away a full gallop, and stopped not till it brought us to St. Alban's; which was just as the day shut in.

I thought I should have fainted several times by the way. With uplifted hands and eyes, God protect me! said I often to myself—can it be I that am here!—My eyes running over, and my heart ready to burst with sighs as involuntary as my flight.

How different, how inexpressibly different, the gay wretch; visibly triumphing (as I could not but

construe his almost rapturous joy) in the success of his arts! But overflowing with complimental flourishes, yet respectfully distant his address, all the way we *flew*; for that, rather than *galloping*, was the motion of the horses; which took, as I believe, a round-about way, to prevent being traced.

I have reason to think there were other horsemen at his devotion; three or four different persons, above the rank of servants, galloping by now and then, on each side of the chariot: but took no notice of them; and I had too much grief, mingled with indignation, notwithstanding all his blandishments, to ask any questions about them, or any thing else.

Think, my dear, what were my thoughts on alighting from the chariot; having no attendant of my own sex; no clothes but what I had on, and those little suited to such a journey as I had *already* taken, and was *still* to take: neither cloak nor hat, nor any thing but a handkerchief about my neck and shoulders: fatigued to death: my mind still more fatigued than my body: and in such a foam the horses, that every one in the inn we put up at guessed [they could not do otherwise] that I was a young giddy creature, who had run away from her friends. This it was easy to see, by their whispering and gaping: more of the people of the house also coming in by turns than were necessary for the attendance.

The mistress of the house, whom he sent in to me, showed me another apartment; and seeing me ready to faint, brought me hartshorn and water; and then, upon my desiring to be left alone for half an hour, retired: for I found my heart ready to burst, on revolving every thing in my thoughts: and the moment she was gone, fastening the door, I threw myself into an old great chair,

and gave way to a violent flood of tears, which a little relieved me.

Mr. Lovelace, sooner than I wished, sent up the gentlewoman, who pressed me, in his name, to admit my brother, or to come down to him: for he had told her I was his sister; and that he had brought me, against my will, and without warning, from a friend's house, where I had been all the winter, in order to prevent my marrying against the consent of my friends, to whom he was now conducting me; and that having given me no time for a travelling dress, I was greatly offended at him.

So, my dear, your frank, your open-hearted friend, was forced to countenance this tale; which indeed suited me the better, because I was unable for some time to talk, speak, or look up: and so my dejection, and grief, and silence, might very well pass before the gentlewoman and her niece, who attended me, as a fit of sullenness.

The room I was in being a bedchamber, I chose to go down, at his repeated message, attended by the mistress of the house, to that in which he was. He approached me with great respect, yet not exceeding a brotherly politeness, where a brother *is* polite: and, calling me his dearest sister, asked after the state of my mind: and hoped I would forgive him; for never brother half so well loved a sister as he me.

A wretch! how naturally did he fall into the character, although I was so much out of mine!

Unthinking creatures have some comfort in the shortness of their views: in their unapprehensiveness: and that they penetrate not beyond the present moment: in short that they *are* unthinking!—But, for a person of my thoughtful disposition, who has

been accustomed to look forward, as well to the *possible* as to the *probable*, what comfort can I have in my reflections?

But let me give you the particulars of our conversation a little before and after our supper-time, joining both in one.

When we were alone, he besought me (I cannot say but with all the tokens of a passionate and respectful tenderness) to be better reconciled to myself and to him; he repeated all the vows of honour and inviolable affection that he ever made me: he promised to be wholly governed by me in every future step. He asked me to give him leave to propose, whether I chose to set out next day to either of his aunts?

I was silent. I knew not what to say nor what to do.

Whether I chose to have private lodgings procured for me in either of those ladies' neighbourhood, as were once my thoughts?

I was still silent.

Whether I chose to go to either of Lord M.'s seats; that of Berks, or that in the county we were in?

In lodgings, I said, any where, where he was not to be.

He had *promised this*, he owned; and he would religiously keep to his word, as soon as he found all danger of pursuit over, and that I was settled to my mind. But, if the place were indifferent to me, London was the safest, and the most private: and his relations should all visit me there, the moment I thought fit to admit them. His cousin Charlotte, particularly, should attend me as my companion, if I would accept of her, as soon as she was able to go abroad. Meantime, would I go to Lady Betty

Lawrence's? (Lady Sarah was a melancholy woman) I should be the most welcome guest she ever received.

I told him, I wished not to go (immediately, however, and in the frame I was in, and likely not to be out of) to any of his relations: that my reputation was concerned to have *him* absent from me:—that, if I were in some private lodging, the meaner the less to be suspected (as it would be known that I went away by his means, and he would be supposed to have provided me handsome accommodations) it would be most suitable both to my mind and to my situation: that this might be best, I should think, in the country for *me*; in town for *him*. And no matter how soon he was known to be there.

If he might deliver his opinion, he said, it was, that since I declined going to any of his relations, London was the only place in the world to be private in. Every new comer in a country town or village excited a curiosity: a person of my figure [and many compliments he made me] would excite more. Even messages and letters, where none used to be brought, would occasion inquiry. He had not provided a lodging any where, supposing I would choose to go either to London, where accommodations of that sort might be fixed upon in an hour's time, or to Lady Betty's; or to Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat, where was the housekeeper, an excellent woman, Mrs. Greme, such another as my Norton.

To be sure, I said, if I were pursued, it would be in their first passion; and some one of his relation's houses would be the place they would expect to find me at—I knew not what to do.

My pleasure should determine him, he said, be it what it would. Only that I were safe was all

he was solicitous about. He had lodgings in town; but he did not offer to propose them. He knew I would have more objections to go to them than I could have to go to Lord M.'s or to Lady Betty's.

No doubt of it, I replied, with such an indignation in my manner, as made him run over with professions, that he was far from proposing them, or wishing for my acceptance of them. And again he repeated, that my honour and safety were all he was solicitous about; assuring me, that my will should be a law to him in every particular.

I was too peevish, and too much afflicted, and indeed too much incensed against him, to take well any thing he said.

I thought, myself, I said, extremely unhappy. I knew not what to determine upon: my reputation now, no doubt, utterly ruined: destitute of clothes: unfit to be seen by any body: my very indigence, as I might call it, proclaiming my folly to every one who saw me; who would suppose that I had been taken at advantage, or had given an undue one; and had no power over either my will or my actions: that I could not but think I had been dealt artfully with;—that he had seemed to have taken, what he might suppose, the just measure of my weakness, founded on my youth and inexperience: that I could not forgive myself for meeting him: that my heart bled for the distresses of my father and mother on this occasion: that I would give the world, and all my hopes in it, to have been still in my father's house, whatever had been my usage: that, let him protest and vow what he would, I saw something low and selfish in his love, that he could study to put a young creature upon making such a sacrifice of her duty and conscience: when a person, actuated by a generous love, must seek to oblige the object of it in every

thing essential to her honour and to her peace of mind.

He was very attentive to all I said, never offering to interrupt me once. His answer to every article, almost methodically, showed his memory.

'What I had said, he told me, made him very grave, and he would answer accordingly.

'He was grieved at his heart to find that he had so little share in my favour or confidence.

'As to my *reputation* (he must be very sincere with me); that could not suffer half so much by the step I so greatly regretted to have taken as by the confinement, and equally foolish and unjust treatment, I had met with from my relations: that every mouth was full of blame of them, of my brother and sister particularly; and of wonder at my patience: that he must repeat what he had written to me, he believed, more than once, that my friends themselves expected, that I should take a proper opportunity to free myself from their persecutions; why else did they confine me? That my exalted character, as he called it, would still bear me out with those who knew *me*; who knew my *brother's* and *sister's* motives; and who knew the wretch they were for compelling me to have.

'With regard to *clothes*; who, as matters were circumstanced, could expect that I should be able to bring away any others than those I had on at the time? For *present* use or wear, all the ladies of his family would take a pride to supply me: for *future*, the product of the best looms, not only in England, but throughout the world, were at my command.

'If I wanted *money*, as no doubt I must, he should be proud to supply me: would to heaven, he might presume to hope there were but one interest between us!'

And then he would fain have had me to accept

of a bank note of an hundred pounds: which, unawares to me, he put into my hand: but which, you may be sure, I refused with warmth.

'He was inexpressibly grieved and surprised, he said, to hear me say he had acted *artfully* by me. He came provided, according to my *confirmed* appointment' [*a wretch to upbraid me thus!*] 'to redeem me from my persecutors; and little expected a change of sentiment, and that he should have so much difficulty to prevail upon me as he had met with: that perhaps I might think his offer to go *into the garden with me*, and to face my assembled relations, was a piece of *art only*: but that if I did, I wronged him: since to this hour, seeing my excessive uneasines, he wished, with all his soul, he had been permitted to acccompany me in. It was always his maxim to brave a threatened danger. Threateners, where they have an opportunity to put in force their threat, were seldom to be feared. But had he been assured of a private stab, or of as many death's wounds as there were persons in my family (made desperate as he should have been by my return), he would have attended me into the house.'

So, my dear, what I have to do, is to hold myself inexcusable for meeting such a determined and audacious spirit; that's all! I have hardly any question now, but that he would have contrived some wicked stratagem or other to have got me away, had I met him at a midnight hour, as once or twice I had thoughts to do; and that would have been more terrible still.

He concluded this part of his talk with saying, 'That he doubted not, but that had he attended me in, he should have come off in every one's opinion so well, that he should have had general leave to renew his visits.'

He went on—'He must be so bold as to tell me'

that he should have paid a visit of this kind (but indeed accompanied by several of his trusty friends) had I *not* met him; and that very afternoon too: for he could not tamely let the dreadful Wednesday come, without making some effort to change their determinations.'

What, my dear, was to be done with such a man!

'That therefore for my sake, as well as for his own, he had reason to wish that a disease so desperate had been attempted to be overcome by as desperate a remedy. We all know, said he, that great ends are sometimes brought about by the very means by which they are endeavoured to be frustrated.'

My present situation, I am sure, thought I, affords a sad evidence of this truth!

I was silent all this time. My blame was indeed turned inward. Sometimes too I was half-frighted at his audaciousness: at others, had the less inclination to interrupt him, being excessively fatigued, and my spirits sunk to nothing, with the view even of the best prospects with such a man.

This gave him opportunity to proceed: and that he did; assuming a still more serious air.

'As to what further remained for him to say, in answer to what I had said, he hoped I would pardon him; but, upon his soul, he was concerned, infinitely concerned, he repeated (his colour and his voice rising) that it was *necessary* for him to observe, how much I chose rather to have run the risk of being Solmes's wife, than to have it in my power to reward a man who, I must forgive him, had been as much insulted on my account as *I* had been on *his*—who had watched my commands, and (pardon me, madam) every *changeable* motion of your pen, all hours, in all weathers, and with a

cheerfulness and ardour that nothing but the most faithful and obsequious passion could inspire.'

I now, my dear, began to revive into a little more warmth of attention.—

'And all, madam, for what?'—How I stared! for he stopt then a moment or two—'*Only*,' went he on, 'to prevail upon you to free yourself from ungenerous and base oppression'—

Sir, Sir! indignantly, said I—

'Hear me but out, dearest madam!—My heart is full—I *must* speak what I have to say—to be told (for your words are yet in my ears and at my heart!) that you would give the world, *and all your hopes in it*, to have been still in your cruel and gloomy father's house'—

Not a word, sir, against my father!—I will not bear that—

'*Whatever had been your usage*:—and you have a credulity, madam, against all probability, if you believe you should have avoided being Solmes's wife: that I have put you upon *sacrificing your duty and conscience*—yet, dearest creature! see you not the contradiction that your warmth of temper has surprised you into, when the reluctance you showed to the last to leave your persecutors has cleared your conscience from the least reproach of this sort?'—

O sir! sir! are you so critical then? Are you so light in your anger as to dwell upon words?—

Indeed, my dear, I have since thought, that his anger was not owing to that sudden *impetus* which cannot be easily bridled: but rather was a sort of *manageable* anger, let loose to intimidate me.

'Forgive me, madam—I have just done—have I not, in your own opinion, hazarded my life to redeem you from oppression?—Yet is not my reward, after all, precarious?—For, madam, *have you*

not conditioned with me (and, hard as the condition is, *most sacredly will I observe it) that all my hope must be remote?* That you are determined to have it in you power *to favour or reject me totally*, as you please?'—

See, my dear! in every respect my condition changed for the worse! Is it in *my power* to take your advice, if I should think it ever so right to take it*?

'And have you not furthermore declared, proceeded he, *that you will engage to renounce me for ever, if your friends insist upon that cruel renunciation as the terms of being reconciled to you?*

'But, nevertheless, madam, all the merit of having saved you from an odious compulsion shall be mine: I glory in it, though I were to lose you for ever.—*As I see I am but too likely to do*, from your present displeasure: and especially, *if your friends insist upon the terms you are ready to comply with.*

'That you are *your own mistress*, through *my* means, is, I repeat, my boast. *As such*, I humbly implore your favour—and *that only upon the condi-*

* Clarissa has been censured as behaving to Mr. Lovelace, in their first conversation at St. Alban's, and afterwards, with too much reserve, and even with haughtiness. Surely those who have thought her to blame on this account have not paid a due attention to the story. How early, as above, and in what immediately follows, does he remind her of the terms of distance which she prescribed to him before she was in his power, *in hopes to leave a door open for a reconciliation with her friends*, which her heart was set upon? And how artfully does he (unrequired) promise to observe the conditions which she in her present circumstances and situation (in pursuance of Miss Howe's advice) would gladly have dispensed with?—To say nothing of the resentment which she was under a *necessity* to show at the manner of his getting her away, in order to justify to him *the sincerity of her refusal to go off with him.* See, in her subsequent letter to Miss Howe, No. v. her own sense upon this subject.

tions I have yielded to hope for it.—As I now do *thus humbly* [the proud wretch falling on one knee] your forgiveness, for so long detaining your ear, and for all the plain dealing that my undesigning heart would not be denied to utter by my lips.'

O sir, pray rise!—Let the obliged kneel, if one of us must kneel! But, nevertheless, proceed not in this strain, I *beseech* you. You have had a great deal of trouble about me: but had you let me know *in time*, that you expected to be rewarded for it at the price of my duty, I should have spared you much of it.

Far be it from me, sir, to depreciate merit so *extraordinary*. But let me say, that had it not been for the forbidden correspondence I was teased by you into; and which I had not continued (every letter, for many letters, intended to be the last) but because I thought you a sufferer from my friends; I had not been either confined or ill-treated: nor would my brother's low-meant violence have had a foundation to work upon.

I am far from thinking my case would have been so very desperate as you imagine, had I staid. My father loved me in his heart: he would not see me before; and I wanted *only* to *see* him, and to be *heard*, and a *delay of his sentence* was the least thing I expected from the trial I was to stand.

You are boasting of your merits, sir: let merit *be* your boast, nothing else can attract me. If *personal* considerations had principal weight with me, either in Solmes's disfavour, or in your favour, I should despise *myself*: if you value yourself upon them, in preference to the *person* of the poor Solmes, I shall despise *you*.

You may glory in your fancied merits in getting me away: but the cause of *your* glory, I tell you plainly, is *my* shame.

Make to yourself a title to my regard, which I can better approve of, or else you will not have so much merit with *me* as you have with *yourself*.

But here, sir, like the first pair, (I, at least, driven out of my paradise) are we recriminating. No more shall you need to tell me of your *sufferings* and your *merits*:—your *all hours* and *all weathers*: for I will bear them in memory as long as I live; and if it be impossible for me to *reward* them, be ever ready to own the obligation. All that I desire of you now, is to leave it to myself to seek for some private abode: to take the chariot with you to London, or elsewhere: and, if I have any further occasion for your assistance and protection, I will signify it to you, and be still further obliged to you.

You are warm, my dearest life!—But indeed there is no occasion for it. Had I any views unworthy of my faithful love for you, I should not have been so honest in my declarations.

Then he began again to vow the sincerity of his intentions.

But I took him up short; I am willing to *believe* you, sir. It would be insupportable but to suppose there were a *necessity* for such solemn declarations. [At this he seemed to collect himself, as I may say, into a little more circumspection.] If I thought there *were*, I would not sit with you here, in a public inn, I assure you, although cheated hither, as far as I know, by methods (you must excuse me, sir) which, but to *suspect*, will hardly let me have patience either with you or with myself. But no more of this just now: let me, I beseech you, *good sir*, bowing, [I was very angry!] let me only know whether you intend to leave me, or whether I have only escaped from one confinement to another?

Cheated hither as far as you know, madam! Let

you *know* (and with that air too, charming, though grievous to my heart!) *if you have only escaped from one confinement to another*—amazing! perfectly amazing! and can there be a necessity for me to answer this? You are absolutely your own mistress.—It were very strange if you were not. *The moment you are in a place of safety* I will leave you. To one condition only give me leave to beg your consent: it is this, that you will be pleased, now you are so entirely in your own power, to renew a promise *voluntarily* made before; *voluntarily*, or I would not *now* presume to request it; for although I would not be thought capable of growing upon concession, yet I cannot bear to think of losing the ground your goodness had given me room to hope I had gained; 'That, make up how you please with your relations, you will never marry any other man, while I am living and single, unless I should be so wicked as to give new cause for high displeasure.'

I hesitate not to confirm this promise, sir, upon your *own* condition. In what manner do you expect me to confirm it?

Only, madam, by your word.

Then I never will.

He had the assurance *(I was now in his power)* to salute me as a sealing of my promise, as he called it. His motion was so sudden, that I was not aware of it. It would have looked *affected* to be very angry; yet I could not be pleased, considering this as a leading *freedom* from a spirit so audacious and encroaching: and he might see that I was not.

He passed all that by with an air peculiar to himself—Enough, enough, dearest madam! And now let me beg of you but to conquer this dreadful uneasiness, which gives me to apprehend too much

for my jealous love to bear; and it shall be my whole endeavour to deserve your favour, and to make you the happiest woman in the world, as I shall be the happiest of men.

I broke from him to write to you my preceding letter; but refused to send it by his servant, as I told you. The mistress of the house helped me to a messenger, who was to carry what you should give him to Lord M.'s seat in Hertfordshire, directed for Mrs. Greme, the housekeeper there. And early in the morning, for fear of pursuit, we were to set out that way; and there he proposed to change the chariot-and-six for a chaise-and-pair of his own, which he had at that seat, as it would be a less noticed conveyance.

I looked over my little stock of money; and found it to be no more than seven guineas and some silver: the rest of my stock was but fifty guineas, and that five more than I thought it was when my sister challenged me as to the sum I had by me*: and those I left in my escritoire, little intending to go away with him.

Indeed my case abounds with a shocking number of indelicate circumstances. Among the rest, I was forced to account to *him,* who knew I could have no clothes but what I had on, how I came to have linen with you (for he could not but know I sent for it); lest he should imagine I had an early design to go away with him, and made that a *part of the preparation.*

He most heartily wished, he said, for my mind's sake, that your mother would have afforded me her protection; and delivered himself upon this subject with equal *freedom* and concern.

There are, my dear Miss Howe, a multitude of

* See Vol. I. Letter xliii.

punctilios and decorums, which a young creature must dispense with, who, in a situation like mine, makes a man the intimate attendant of her person. I could now, I think, give twenty reasons stronger than any I have heretofore mentioned, why women of the *least delicacy* should never think of incurring the danger and disgrace of taking the step I have been drawn in to take but with horror and aversion; and why they should look upon the man who should tempt them to it as the vilest and most selfish of seducers.

* * *

Before five o'clock (Tuesday morning) the maid-servant came up to tell me my *brother* was ready, and that breakfast also waited for me in the parlour. I went down with a heart as heavy as my eyes, and received great acknowledgments and compliments from him on being so soon dressed, and ready (as he interpreted it) to continue our journey.

He had the thought which I had not (for what had I to do with thought who had it not when I stood most in need of it?) to purchase for me a cloak and hat, without saying any thing to me. He must reward himself, the artful encroacher said, before the landlady and her maids and niece, for his forethought; and would salute his pretty sullen sister!—He took his reward; and, as he said, a tear with it. While he assured me, still before them [a vile wretch!] that I had nothing to fear from meeting with parents who so dearly loved me.—

How could I be complaisant, my dear, to such a man as this?

When we had got into the chariot, and it began to move, he asked me whether I had any objection to go to Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat? His Lordship, he said, was at his Berkshire one.

I told him, I chose not to go, *as yet*, to any of his relations; for that would indicate a plain defiance to my own. My choice was to go to a private lodging, and for him to be at a distance from me: at least, till I heard how things were taken by my friends—for that, although I had but little hopes of a reconciliation as it *was*, yet if they knew I was in his protection, or in that of any of his friends, (which would be looked upon as the same thing) there would not be room for any hopes at all,

I should govern him as I pleased, he solemnly assured me, in every thing. But he still thought *London* was the best place for me; and if I were once safe there, and in a lodging to my liking, he would go to M. Hall. But as I approved not of London, he would urge it no further.

He proposed, and I consented, to put up at an inn in the neighbourhood of *the Lawn* (as he called Lord M.'s seat in this county) since I chose not to go thither. And here I got two hours to myself, which I told him I should pass in writing another letter to you (meaning my narrative, which, though greatly fatigued, I had begun at St. Alban's), and in one to my sister, to apprise the family (whether they were solicitous about it or not) that I was well; and to beg that my clothes, some particular books, and the fifty guineas I had left in my escritoire, might be sent me.

He asked, if I had considered whither to have them directed?

Indeed, not I, I told him: I was a stranger to—

So was he, he interrupted me; but it struck him by chance—

Wicked story-teller!

But, added he, I will tell you, madam, how it shall be managed—if you don't choose to go to

London, it is, nevertheless, best that your relations should *think* you there; for then they will absolutely despair of finding you. If you write, be pleased to direct, To be left for you, at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square. Mr. Osgood is a man of reputation: and this will effectually amuse them.

Amuse them, my dear!—Amuse whom?—My father!—My uncles!—But it must be so!——*All his expedients ready, you see!*

I had no objection to this: and I have written accordingly. But what answer I shall have, or whether any, that is what gives me no small anxiety.

This, however, is one consolation, that if I have an answer, and although my brother should be the writer, it cannot be more severe than the treatment I have of late received from him and my sister.

Mr. Lovelace staid out about an hour and a half; and then came in; impatiently sending up to me no less than four times to desire admittance. But I sent him word as often that I was busy; and at last, that I should be so till dinner was ready. He then hastened that, as I heard him now and then, with a hearty curse upon the cook and waiters.

This is another of his perfections. I ventured afterwards to check him for his free words, as we sat at dinner.

Having heard him swear at his servant when below, whom, nevertheless, he owns to be a good one; It is a sad life, said I, these innkeepers live, Mr. Lovelace.

No; pretty well I believe—but why, madam, think you, that fellows who eat and drink at other men's cost, or they are sorry innkeepers, should be entitled to pity?

Because of the soldiers they are obliged to quarter! who are generally, I believe, wretched profligates. Bless me! said I, how I heard one of them swear and curse just now at a modest meek man, as I judge by his low voice and gentle answers!—Well do they make it a proverb—*Like a trooper!*

He bit his lip; arose; turned upon his heel; stept to the glass; and looking *confidently* abashed, if I may so say, Ay, madam, said he, these troopers are sad swearing fellows. I think their officers should chastise them for it.

I am sure they deserve chastisement, replied I: for swearing is a most *unmanly* vice, and cursing as *poor* and *low* a one; since it proclaims the profligate's want of power and his wickedness at the same time; for, could such a one *punish* as he *speaks*, he would be a fiend!

Charmingly observed, by my soul, madam!—The next trooper I hear swear and curse, I'll tell him what an *unmanly* and what a *poor* wretch he is.

Mrs. Greme came to pay her *duty* to me, as Mr. Lovelace called it; and was very urgent with me to go to her lord's house; letting me know what handsome things she had heard her lord, and his two nieces, and all the family, say of me; and what wishes for several months past they had put up for the honour she now hoped would soon be done them all.

This gave me some satisfaction, as it confirmed from the mouth of a very good sort of woman all that Mr. Lovelace had told me.

Upon inquiry about a private lodging, she recommended me to a sister-in-law of hers, eight miles from thence.——Where I now am. And what pleased me the better, was, that Mr. Lovelace

(of whom I could see she was infinitely observant) obliged her, of his own motion, to accompany me in the chaise; himself riding on horseback, with his two servants, and one of Lord M.'s. And here we arrived about four o'clock.

But, as I told you in my former, the lodgings are inconvenient. Mr. Lovelace indeed found great fault with them: and told Mrs. Greme (who had said that they were not worthy of us) that they came not up even to her account of them. As the house was a mile from a town, it was not proper for him, he said, to be so far distant from me, lest any thing should happen: and yet the apartments were not separate and distinct enough for me to like them, he was sure.

This must be agreeable enough from him, you will believe.

Mrs. Greme and I had a good deal of talk in the chaise about him: she was very easy and free in her answers to all I asked; and has, I find, a very serious turn.

I led her on to say to the following effect; some part of it not unlike what Lord M.'s dismissed bailiff had said before; by which I find that all the servants have a like opinion of him.

'That Mr. Lovelace was a generous man: that it was hard to say, whether the servants of her lord's family loved or feared him most: that her lord had a very great affection for him: that his two noble aunts were not less fond of him: that his cousins Montague were as good-natured young ladies *as ever lived:* that Lord M. and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty had proposed several ladies to him, before he made his addresses to me; and even since; despairing to move me and my friends in his favour.—But that he had no thoughts of marrying at all, she had heard him say, if it were not to

me: that as well her lord as the two ladies his sisters were a good deal concerned at the ill-usage he received from my family: but admired my character, and wished to have him married to me (although I were not to have a shilling) in preference to any other person, from the opinion they had of the influence I should have over him. That, to be sure, Mr. Lovelace was a wild gentleman: but wildness was a distemper which would cure itself. That her lord delighted in his company, whenever he could get it: but that they often fell out; and his lordship was always forced to submit—indeed, was half afraid of him, she believed; for Mr. Lovelace would do as he pleased. She mingled a thousand pities often, that he acted not up to the talents lent him—yet would have it, that he had fine qualities to found a reformation upon: and, when the happy day came, would make amends for all: and of this all his friends were so assured, that they wished for nothing so earnestly, as for his marriage.'

This, indifferent as it is, is better than my brother says of him.

The people of the house here are very honest-looking industrious folks: Mrs. Sorlings is the gentlewoman's name, The farm seems well stocked, and thriving. She is a widow; has two sons, men grown, who vie with each other which shall take most pains in promoting the common good; and they are both of them, I already see, more respectful to two modest young women their sisters, than my brother was to his sister.

I believe I must stay here longer than at first I thought I should.

I ought to have mentioned, that, before I set out for this place, I received your kind letter *. Every thing is kind from so dear a friend.

* See Vol. II. Letter xlvi.

I own, that after I had told you of my absolute determination not to go away with him, you might well be surprised, at your first hearing that I was actually gone. The Lord bless me, my dear, I myself, at times, can hardly believe it is I, that have been led to take so strange a step.

I have not the better opinion of Mr. Lovelace for his extravagant volubility. He is too full of professions. He says too many fine things *of* me, and *to* me. True respect, true value, I think, lies not in words: words *cannot* express it: the silent awe, the humble, the doubting eye, and even the hesitating voice, better show it by much, than, as our beloved Shakspeare says,

——The rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

The man indeed at times is all upon the *ecstatic;* one of his phrases. But, to my shame and confusion, I must say, that I know too well to what to attribute his transports. In one word, it is to his *triumph,* my dear. And, to impute it to *that* perhaps equally exposes my vanity, and condemns my folly.

We have been alarmed with notions of a pursuit, founded upon a letter from his intelligencer.

How do different circumstances either sanctify or condemn the same action!—What care ought we to take not to confound the distinctions of right and wrong, when *self* comes in the question!—I condemned in Mr. Lovelace the corrupting of a servant of my father's; and now I am glad to give a kind of *indirect* approbation of that fault, by inquiring of him what he hears, by that or any other way, of the manner in which my relations took my flight. A preconcerted, forward, and artful flight, it must undoubtedly appear to them. How grievous

is that to think of! Yet *how*, as I *am situated*, can I put them right?

Most heavily, he says, they take it; but show not so much grief as rage. And he can hardly have patience to hear of the virulence and menaces of my brother against himself. Then a merit is made to me of his forbearance.

What a satisfaction am I robbed of, my dearest friend, when I reflect upon my inconsiderateness! O that I had it still in my power to say I *suffered* wrong, rather than *did* wrong! That others were more wanting in their kindness to me, than I in duty (where duty is owing) to them.

Fie upon me! for *meeting the seducer!*—Let all end as happily as it now may, I have laid up for myself *remorse for my whole life.*

What still more concerns me is, that every time I see this man, I am still at a greater loss than before what to make of him. I watch every turn of his countenance: and I think I see very deep lines in it. He looks with more meaning, I verily think, than he used to look; yet not more serious; not less gay—I don't know how he looks—but with more confidence a great deal than formerly; and yet he never wanted that.

But here is the thing; I behold him with *fear* now, as conscious of the power my indiscretion has given him over me. And well may *he* look more elate, when he sees me deprived of all the self-supposed significance, which adorns and exalts a person who has been accustomed to respect; and who now, by a *conscious inferiority*, allows herself *to be overcome*, and in a state of *obligation*, as I may say, to a man who from an humble suitor to her for her favour, assumes the consequence and airs of a protector.

I shall send this, as my former, by a poor man,

who travels every day with pedlary matters. He will leave it at Mrs. Knollys's, as you direct.

If you hear any thing of my father and mother, and of their health, and how my friends were affected by my unhappy step, pray be so good as to write me a few lines by the messenger, if his waiting for them can be known to you.

I am afraid to ask you, whether, upon reading that part of my narrative already in your hands, you think any sort of extenuation lies for

Your unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER III.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday, Wed. Apr. 11, 12.

You claim my promise, that I will be as particular as possible, in all that passes between me and my goddess. Indeed, I never had a more illustrious subject to exercise my pen upon. And, moreover, I have leisure; for by her good will, my access would be as difficult to her, as that of the humblest slave to an eastern monarch. Nothing, then, but inclination to write can be wanting: and since our friendship, and your obliging attendance upon me at the White Heart, will not excuse that, I will endeavour to keep my word.

I parted with thee and thy brethren with a full resolution, thou knowest, to rejoin ye, if she once again disappointed me, in order to go together (attended by our servants, for show-sake) to the gloomy father; and demand audience of the tyrant upon the freedoms taken with my character. In short, to have tried by fair means, if fair would

do, to make him change his resolutions; and treat his charming *daughter* with less inhumanity, and *me* with more civility.

I told thee my reasons for not going in search of a letter of countermand. I was right; for if I had, I should have found such a one; and had I received it, she would not have met me. Did she think, that after I had been more than once disappointed, I would not keep her to her promise; that I would not hold her to it, when I had got her in so deeply?

The moment I heard the door unbolt, I was sure of her. That motion made my heart bound to my throat. But when that was followed with the presence of my charmer, flashing upon me all at once in a flood of brightness, sweetly dressed, though all unprepared for a journey, I trod air, and hardly thought myself a mortal.

Thou shalt judge of her dress, as at the moment I first beheld her she appeared to me, and as, upon a nearer observation, she really was. I am a critic, thou knowest, in women's dresses. Many a one have I taught to dress, and helped to undress. But there is such a native elegance in this lady, that she surpasses all that I could imagine surpassing. But then her person adorns what she wears, more than dress can adorn her; and that's her excellence.

Expect therefore a faint sketch of her admirable person with her dress.

Her wax-like flesh (for after all, flesh and blood I think she is) by its delicacy and firmness, answers for the soundness of her health. Thou hast often heard me launch out in praise of her complexion. I never in my life beheld a skin so *illustriously fair*. The lily and the driven snow it is

nonsense to talk of: her lawn and her laces one might indeed compare to those: but what a whited wall would a woman appear to be, who had a complexion which would justify such unnatural comparisons? But this lady is all glowing, all charming flesh and blood: yet so clear, that every meandering vein is to be seen in all the lovely parts of her which custom permits to be visible.

Thou hast heard me also describe the wavy ringlets of her shining hair, needing neither art nor powder; of itself an ornament, defying all other ornaments: wantoning in and about a neck that is beautiful beyond description.

Her head-dress was a Brussels-lace cap, peculiarly adapted to the charming air and turn of her features. A sky-blue ribband illustrated that. But although the weather was somewhat sharp, she had not on either hat or cloak-hood; for besides that she loves to use herself hardily (by which means, and by a temperance truly exemplary, she is allowed to have given high health and vigour to an originally tender constitution) she seems to have intended to show me, that she was determined not to stand to her appointment. O Jack! that such a sweet girl should be a rogue!

Her gown was a pale primrose-coloured paduasoy: the cuffs and robings curiously embroidered by the fingers of this ever-charming Arachne, in a running pattern of violets and their leaves; the light in the flowers silver; gold in the leaves. A pair of diamond snaps in her ears. A white handkerchief wrought by the same inimitable fingers concealed—O Belford! what still more inimitable beauties did it not conceal!—And I saw, all the way we rode, the bounding heart (by its throbbing

motions I saw it!) dancing beneath the charming umbrage.

Her ruffles were the same as her cap. Her apron a flowered lawn. Her coat white satin, quilted: blue satin her shoes, braided with the same colour, without lace; for what need has the prettiest foot in the world of ornament? neat buckles in them: and on her charming arms a pair of black velvet glove-like muffs of her own invention; for she makes and gives fashions as she pleases.—Her hands velvet of themselves, thus uncovered the freer to be grasped by those of her adorer.

I have told thee what were *my* transports, when the undrawn bolt presented to me my long-expected goddess.—*Her* emotions were more sweetly feminine, after the first moments; for then the fire of her starry eyes began to sink into a less dazzling languor. She trembled: nor knew she how to support the agitations of a heart she had never found so ungovernable. She was even fainting, when I clasped her in my supporting arms. What a precious moment that! How near, how sweetly near the throbbing partners!

By her dress, I saw, as I observed before, how unprepared she was for a journey; and not doubting her intention once more to disappoint me, I would have drawn her after me. Then began a contention the most vehement that ever I had with woman. It would pain thy friendly heart to be told the infinite trouble I had with her. I begged, I prayed, on my knees, yet in vain, I begged and prayed her to answer her own appointment: and had I not happily provided for such a struggle, knowing whom I had to deal with, I had certainly failed in my design; and as certainly would have accompanied her in, without thee and thy brethren:

and who knows what might have been the consequence?

But my honest agent answering my signal, *though not quite so soon as I expected,* in the manner thou knowest I had prescribed, They are coming! they are coming!—Fly, fly, my beloved creature, cried I, drawing my sword with a flourish, as if I would have slain half an hundred of the supposed intruders: and, seizing her trembling hands, I drew her after me so swiftly, that *my* feet, winged by love, could hardly keep pace with *her* feet, agitated by fear.—And so I became her emperor.

I'll tell thee all, when I see thee: and thou shalt then judge of *my* difficulties, and of *her* perverseness. And thou wilt rejoice with me at my conquest over such a watchful and open-eyed charmer.

But seest thou not now (as I think I do) the wind-outstripping fair one flying *from* her love *to* her love? Is there not such a game?—Nay, flying from friends she was resolved not to abandon, to the man she was determined not to go off with?—*The sex! the sex, all over!*—Charming contradiction!—Hah, hah, hah, hah!—I must here—I must here, lay down my pen, to hold my sides: for I must have my laugh out now the fit is upon me.

* * *

I BELIEVE—I believe—Hah, hah, hah! I believe, Jack, my dogs conclude me mad: for here has one of them popt in, as if to see what ailed me; or whom I had with me. The whorson caught the laugh, as he went out.—Hah, hah, hah!—An *impudent* dog!—O Jack, knewest thou my conceit, and were but thy laugh joined to mine, I believe it would hold me for an hour longer.

But, O my best beloved fair one, repine not thou

at the arts by which thou suspectest thy fruitless vigilance has been over watched.—Take care, that thou provokest not new ones, that may be still more worthy of thee. If once thy emperor decrees thy fall, thou shalt greatly fall. Thou shalt have cause, if that come to pass, which may come to pass, (for why wouldst thou put off marriage to so long a day, as till thou hast reason to be convinced of my reformation, dearest?) thou shalt have cause, never fear, to sit down more satisfied with thy stars, than with thyself. And come the worst to the worst, glorious terms will I give thee. Thy garrison, with general *Prudence* at the head, and governor *Watchfulness* bringing up the rear, shall be allowed to march out with all the honours due to so brave a resistance. And all thy sex, and all mine, that hear of my stratagems, and of thy conduct, shall acknowledge the fortress as nobly won as defended.

'Thou wilt not dare, methinks I hear thee say, to attempt to reduce such a goddess as this, to a standard unworthy of her excellencies. It is impossible, Lovelace, that thou shouldst intend to break through oaths and protestations so solemn.'

That I *did not* intend it, is certain. That I *do* intend it, I cannot (my heart, my reverence for her will not let me) say. But knowest thou not my aversion to the state of shackles?—And is she not IN MY POWER?

'And wilt thou, Lovelace, abuse that power which'—

Which what, Belford?—Which I obtained not by her own consent, but *against* it.

'But which thou never hadst obtained, had she not esteemed thee above all men.'

And which I had never taken so much pains to obtain, had I not loved her above all women. So

far upon a par, Jack! and if thou pleadest honour, ought not honour to be mutual? If mutual, does it not imply mutual trust, mutual confidence? And what have I had of *that* from her to boast of?—Thou knowest the whole progress of our warfare: for a warfare it has truly been; and far, very far, from an amorous warfare too. Doubts, mistrusts, upbraidings, on her part: humiliations the most abject, on mine. Obliged to assume such airs of reformation, that every varlet of ye has been afraid I should reclaim in good earnest. And hast thou not thyself frequently observed to me, how awkwardly I returned to my usual gaiety, after I had been within a mile of her father's garden-wall, although I had not seen her?

Does she not deserve to pay for all this?—To make an honest fellow like an hypocrite; what a vile thing is that!

Then thou knowest what a *false* little rogue she has been. How little conscience she has made of disappointing me. Hast thou not been a witness of my ravings, on this score? Have I not, in the height of them, vowed revenge upon the faithless charmer?—And if I *must* be forsworn, whether I answer her expectations, or follow my own inclinations; and if the option be in my own power; can I hesitate a moment which to choose?

Then, I fancy by her circumspection, and her continual grief, that she *expects* some mischief from me. I don't care to disappoint any body I have a value for.

But O the noble, the exalted creature! Who can avoid hesitating when he thinks of an offence against her? Who can but pity—

Yet on the other hand, so loth at last to venture, though threatened to be forced into the nuptial fetters with a man whom to look upon as a rival,

is to disgrace myself!—So sullen, now she has ventured!—What title has she to pity; and to a pity which her pride would make her disclaim?

But I resolve not *any way*. I will see how *her* will works; and how *my* will leads me on. I will give the combatants fair play, and, yet every time I attend her, I find that she is less in *my* power; I more in *hers*.

Yet, a foolish little rogue! to forbid me to think of marriage till I am a reformed man! Till the implacables of her family change their natures, and become placable.

It is true, when she was for making those conditions, she did not think, that without *any*, she should *be cheated out of herself*; for so the dear soul, as I may tell thee in its place, phrases it.

How it swells my pride, to have been able to outwit such a vigilant charmer! I am taller by half a yard in my imagination than I was. I look *down* upon every body now. Last night I was still more extravagant. I took off my hat, as I walked, to see if the lace were not scorched, supposing it had brushed down a star; and, before I put it on again, in mere wantonness and heart's ease, I was buffeting the moon.

In short, my whole soul is joy. When I go to bed I laugh myself asleep: and I awake either laughing or singing—yet nothing nearly in view, neither—for why?—*I am not yet reformed enough!*

I told thee at the time, if thou rememberest, how capable this restriction was of being turned upon the over-scrupulous dear creature, could I once get her out of her father's house; and were I disposed to punish her for her family's faults, and for the infinite trouble she herself had given me. Little thinks she, *that I have kept an account of both*: and that, when my heart is soft, and all

her own, I can but turn to my *memoranda,* and harden myself at once.

O my charmer look to it: abate of thy haughty airs! Value not thyself upon thy sincerity, if thou *art* indifferent to me! I will not bear it *now.* *Art thou not in my* POWER?—Nor, if thou lovest me, think, that the female affectation of denying thy love, will avail thee *now,* with a heart so proud and so jealous as mine?—Remember, moreover, that all thy family sins are upon thy head!—

But, ah! Jack, when I see my angel, when I am admitted to the presence of this radiant beauty, what will become of all this vapouring?

But, be my end what it may, I am obliged by thy penetration, fair one, to proceed by the sap. *Fair and softly. A wife at any time!* Marriage will be always in my power.

When put to the university, the same course of *initial studies* will qualify the yonker for the one line or for the other. The *genius* ought to point out the future lawyer, divine, or physician!—So the same cautious conduct, with such a vigilance, will do either for the *wife,* or for the *no*-wife. When I reform, I'll marry. 'Tis time enough for the *one,* the *lady* must say—for the *other,* say *I!*

But how I ramble!—This it is to be in such a situation, that I know not what to resolve upon.

I'll tell thee my *inclinings,* as I proceed. The *pro's* and the *con's* I'll tell thee: but being got too far from the track I set out in, I will close here. I may however write every day something, and send it as opportunity offers.

Regardless, nevertheless, I shall be in all I write, of connection, accuracy, or of any thing but of my own imperial will and pleasure.

LETTER IV.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Wednesday night, April 12.

I HAVE your narrative, my dear. You are the same noble creature you ever were. Above disguise, above art, above attempting to extenuate a failing.

The only family in the world, yours, surely, that could have driven such a daughter upon such extremities.

But you must not be so very much too good for *them,* and for the *case.*

You lay the blame so properly and so unsparingly *upon your meeting him,* that nothing can be added to that subject by your worst enemies, were they to see what you have written.

I am not surprised, now I have read your narrative, that so bold and so contriving a man—I am forced to break off——

* * *

You stood it out much better and longer—here again comes my bustling, jealous mother!

* * *

DON'T be so angry at yourself. Did you not do for the best at the time? As to your first fault, *the answering his letters;* it was almost incumbent upon you to assume the guardianship of such a family, when the bravo of it had run riot as he did, and brought himself into danger.

Except your mother, who has no will of her own, have any of them common sense?—

Forgive me, my dear—here is that stupid uncle Antony of yours. A pragmatical, conceited, positive—He came yesterday, in a fearful pucker,

and puffed, and blowed, and stumped about our hall and parlour, while his message was carried up.

My mother was dressing. These widows are as starched as the old bachelors. She would not see him in a dishabille for the world—*what can she mean by it?*

His errand was to set her against you, and to show their determined rage on your going away. The issue proved too evidently that this was the principal end of his visit.

The odd creature desired to speak with her alone. I am not used to such exceptions whenever any visits are made to my mother.

When she was *primmed out*, down she came to him. They locked themselves in. The two positive heads were put together—close together I suppose; for I listened, but could hear nothing distinctly, though they both seemed full of their subject.

I had a good mind, once or twice, to have made them open the door. Could I have been sure of keeping but tolerably my temper, I would have *demanded* admittance. But I was afraid, if I had obtained it, that I should have forgot it was my mother's house, and been for turning him out of it. To come to rave against and abuse my dearest, dearest, faultless friend! and the ravings to be encouraged, and perhaps joined in, in order to justify themselves; the one for contributing to drive that dear friend out of her father's house; the other for refusing her a temporary asylum, till the reconciliation could have been effected, which her dutiful heart was set upon; and which it would have become the love which my mother had ever pretended for you, to have mediated for—could I have had patience!

The *issue*, as I said, showed what the errand was—Its first appearance, after the old fusty fellow was marched off [*you must excuse me, my dear*] was in a kind of gloomy, Harlowe-like reservedness in my mother; which upon a few resenting flirts of mine, was followed by a rigorous prohibition of correspondence.

This put us, you may suppose, upon terms not the most agreeable; I desired to know, if I were prohibited *dreaming* of you?—For, my dear, you have all my sleeping as well as waking hours.

I can easily allow for your correspondence with your wretch at first (and yet your motives were excellent) by the effect this prohibition has upon me; since, if possible, it has made me love you better than before; and I am more desirous than ever of corresponding with you.

But I have nevertheless a much more laudable motive—I should think myself the unworthiest of creatures, could I be brought to slight a dear friend, and such a meritorious one, in her distress.—I would die first—and so I told my mother. And I have desired her not to watch me in my retired hours; nor to insist upon my lying with her constantly, which she now does more earnestly than ever. 'Twere better, I told her, that the Harlowe Betty were borrowed to be set over me.

Mr. Hickman, who greatly honours you, has, unknown to me, interposed so warmly in your favour with my mother, that it makes for him no small merit with me.

I cannot, at present, write to every particular, unless I would be in *set* defiance.—Tease, tease, tease, for ever! The same thing, though answered fifty times over, in every hour to be repeated—Lord bless me! what a life must my poor father—but let me remember to whom I am writing.

If this ever-active, ever mischievous monkey of a man, this Lovelace, contrived as you suspect—but here comes my mother again—ay, stay a little longer, my mamma, if you please—I can but be suspected! I can but be chidden for making you wait; and chidden I am sure to be, whether I do or not, in the way you, my good mamma, are *Antony'd* into.

Bless me! how impatient she is!—How she thunders at the door!—This moment, madam!—How came I to double-lock myself in!—What have I done with the key!—Deuce take the key!—Dear madam!—You flutter one so!

* * *

You may believe, my dear, that I took care of my papers before I opened the door. We have had a charming dialogue—she flung from me in a passion—

So—what's now to be done?—Sent for down in a very peremptory manner, I assure you. What an incoherent letter will you have, when I can get it to you! But now I know where to send it, Mr. Hickman shall find me a messenger. Yet, if he be detected, poor soul, he will be *Harlowed-off*, as well as his *meek mistress*.

Thursday, April 13.

I HAVE this moment your continuation-letter. And am favoured, at present, with the absence of my Argus-ey'd mother.—

Dear creature! I can account for all your difficulties. A young lady of your delicacy!—And with such a man!—I must be brief——

The man's a fool, my dear, with all his pride, and with all his complaisance, *and affected regards to your injunctions.* Yet his ready inventions—

Sometimes I think you should go to Lady Betty's.

I know not what to advise you to do.—I *should*, if you were not so intent upon reconciling yourself to your relations. Yet they are implacable. You can have no hopes from them. Your uncle's errand to my mother may convince you of that; and if you have an answer to your letter to your sister, that will confirm you, I dare say.

You need not to have been afraid of asking me, whether upon reading your narrative, I thought any extenuation could lie for what you have done! I have, as above, before I had your question, told you my mind as to that.—And I repeat, that I think, your *provocations and inducements* considered, you are free from blame: at least, the freest, that ever young creature was who took such a step.

But *you took it not*—you were *driven on one side*, and, possibly, *tricked on the other*.—If any woman on earth shall be circumstanced as you were, and shall hold out so long as you did, against her persecutors on one hand, and her seducer on the other, I will forgive her for all the rest of her conduct, be it what it will.

All your acquaintance, you may suppose, talk of nobody but you. Some indeed bring your admirable character for a plea against you: but nobody does, or *can*, acquit your father and uncles.

Every body seems apprized of your brother's and sister's motives. Your flight is, no doubt, the very thing they aimed to drive you to, by the various attacks they made upon you; unhoping (as they must do all the time) the success of their schemes in Solmes's behalf. They knew, that if once you were restored to favour, the suspended love of your father and uncles, like a river breaking down a temporary obstruction, would return with double force; and that then you would ex-

pose, and triumph over all their arts.—And now, I hear they *enjoy* their successful malice.

Your father is all rage and violence. He ought, I am sure, to turn his rage inward. All your family accuse you of acting with *deep art;* and are put upon supposing that you are actually *every hour exulting over them,* with your man, in the success of it.

They all pretend now, that your trial of Wednesday was to be the last.

Advantage would indeed, my mother owns, have been taken of your yielding, if you had yielded. But had you not been to be prevailed upon, they would have given up their scheme, and taken your promise for renouncing Lovelace—believe them who will!

They own, however, that a minister was to be present—Mr. Solmes was to be at hand—and your father was previously to try his authority over you, in order to make you sign the settlements—all of it a romantic contrivance of your wild-headed foolish brother, I make no doubt. Is it likely that he and Bell would have given way to your restoration to favour, supposing it in their power to hinder it, on any other terms than those their hearts had been so long set upon?

How they took your flight, when they found it out, may be better supposed than described.

Your aunt Hervey, it seems, was the first that went down to the ivy summer-house, in order to acquaint you that their search was over. Betty followed her; and they not finding you there, went on towards the cascade, according to a hint of yours.

Returning by the garden-door, they met a servant [*they don't say it was that Joseph Leman; but*

it is very likely that it was he] running, as he said, from pursuing Mr. Lovelace (a great hedge stake in his hand, and out of breath) to alarm the family.

If it were this fellow, and if he were employed in the double agency of cheating them and cheating you, what shall we think of the wretch you are with?—Run away from him, my dear, if so—no matter to whom—or marry him, if you cannot.

Your aunt and all your family were accordingly alarmed by this fellow—*evidently when too late for pursuit.* They got together; and when a *posse*, ran to the place of interview; and some of them as far as to the tracks of the chariot-wheels, without stopping. And having heard the man's tale upon the spot, a general lamentation, a mutual upbraiding, and rage, and grief, were echoed from the different persons, according to their different tempers and conceptions. And they returned like fools as they went.

Your brother, at first, ordered horses and armed men to be got ready for a pursuit. Solmes and your uncle *Tony* were to be of the party. But your mother and your aunt Hervey dissuaded them from it, for fear of adding evil to evil; not doubting but Lovelace had taken measures to support himself in what he had done; and especially when the servant declared, that he saw you run with him as fast as you could set foot to the ground; and that there were several armed men on horseback at a small distance off.

* * *

My mother's absence was owing to a suspicion, that the Knollys's were to assist in our correspondence. She made them a visit upon it. *She does every thing at once.* And they have promised, that

no more letters shall be left there, without her knowledge.

But Mr. Hickman has engaged one Filmer, a husbandman in the lane we call Finch-lane, near us, to receive them. Thither you will be pleased to direct yours, under cover, to Mr. John Soberton; and Mr. Hickman himself will call for them there; and there shall leave mine. It goes against me too to make him so useful to me.—He looks already so proud upon it! I shall have him [who knows?] give himself airs—he had best consider, that the favour he has been long aiming at, may put him into a very dangerous, a very ticklish situation. He that can oblige, may disoblige—happy for some people not to have it in their power to offend!

I will have patience, if I can for a while, to see if these bustlings in my mother will subside—but, upon my word, I will not long bear this usage.

Sometimes I am ready to think, that my mother carries it thus on purpose to tire me out, and to make me the sooner marry. If I find it to be so, and that Hickman, in order to make a merit with me, is in the low plot, I will never bear him in my sight.

Plotting wretch, as I doubt your man is, I wish to heaven that you were married, that you might brave them all, and not be forced to hide yourself, and be hurried from one inconvenient place to another. I charge you, omit not to lay hold on any handsome opportunity that may offer for that purpose.

Here again comes my mother——

* * *

We look mighty glum upon each other, I can tell you. She had not best *Harlowe* me at this rate—I won't bear it.

I have a vast deal to write. I know not what to write first. Yet my mind is full, and ready to run over.

I am got into a private corner of the garden, to be out of her way.—Lord help these mothers!—Do they think they can prevent a daughter's writing, or doing any thing she has a mind to do, by suspicion, watchfulness, and scolding?—They had better place a confidence in one by half—a generous mind scorns to abuse a generous confidence.

You have a nice, a very nice part to act with this wretch—who yet has, I think, but one plain path before him. I pity you—but you must make the best of the lot you have been forced to draw. Yet I see your difficulties.—But, if he do not offer to abuse your confidence, I would have you *seem* at least to place some in him.

If you think not of marrying soon, I approve of your resolution to fix somewhere out of his reach. And if he know not where to find you, so much the better. Yet I verily believe, they would force you back, could they but come at you, if they were not afraid of *him*.

I think, by all means, you should demand of both your trustees to be put in possession of your own estate. Meantime I have sixty guineas at your service. I beg you will command them. Before they are gone, I'll take care you shall be further supplied. I don't think you'll have a shilling or a shilling's worth of your own from your relations, unless you extort it from them.

As they believe you went away by your own consent, they are, it seems, equally surprised and glad that you have left your jewels and money behind you, and have contrived for clothes so ill. Very little likelihood this shows of their answering your request.

Indeed every one who knows not what I *now* know, must be at a loss to account for your *flight*, as they will call it. And how, my dear, can one report it with any tolerable advantage to you?—To say, you *did not intend it* when you met him, who will believe it?—to say, that a person of your known steadiness and punctilio was *over-persuaded* when you gave him the meeting, how will that sound?—To say, you were *tricked out of yourself*, and people were to give credit to it, how disreputable!—And while *unmarried*, and *yet with him*, the man a man of such a character, what would it not lead a censuring world to think?

I want to see how you put it in your letter for your clothes.

As you may depend upon all the little spiteful things they can offer, instead of sending what you write for, pray accept the sum I tender. What will seven guineas do?—And I will find a way to send you also any of my clothes and linen for present supply. I beg, my dear Clarissa, that you will not put your Anna Howe upon a foot with Lovelace, in refusing to accept of my offer. If you do not oblige me, I shall be apt to think that you rather incline to be obliged to *him*, than to favour *me*. And if I find this, I shall not know how to reconcile it with your delicacy in other respects.

Pray inform me of every thing that passes between you and him. My cares for you (however needless, from your own prudence) make me wish you to continue to be very minute. If any thing occur that you would tell me of if I were present, fail not to put it down in writing, although, from your natural diffidence, it should not appear to you altogether so worthy of your pen, or of my knowing. A stander-by may see more of the game than one that plays. Great consequences, like

great folks, generally owe their greatness to small causes, and little incidents.

Upon the whole, I do not now think it is in your power to dismiss him when you please. I apprized you beforehand, that it would not. I repeat, therefore, that were I you, I would at least *seem* to place some confidence in him. So long as he is decent, you may. Very visibly observable, to such delicacy as yours, must be that behaviour in him, which will make him unworthy of *some* confidence.

Your relations, according to what old Antony says to *my mother*, and *she to me*, (by way of threatening, that you will not gain your supposed ends upon them by your flight) seem to expect that you will throw yourself into Lady Betty's protection; and that she will offer to mediate for you: and they vow, that they will never hearken to any terms of accommodation that shall come from that quarter. They might speak out, and say, from *any* quarter; for I dare aver, that your brother and sister will not let them cool—at least, till their uncles have made such dispositions, and perhaps your father too, as they would have them make.

As this letter will apprize you of an alteration in the place to which you must direct your next, I send it by a friend of Mr. Hickman, who may be depended upon. He has business in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Sorlings; and he knows her. He will return to Mr. Hickman this night; and bring back any letter you shall have ready to send, or can get ready. It is moonlight. He'll not mind waiting for you. I choose not to send by any of Mr. Hickman's servants—at present, however. Every hour is now, or may be, important; and may make an alteration in your resolutions necessary.

I hear, at this instant, my mother calling about

her, and putting every body into motion. She will soon, I suppose, make *me* and *my* employment the subjects of her inquiry.

Adieu, my dear. May heaven preserve you, and restore you with honour as unsullied as your mind to

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER V.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday afternoon, April 13.

I AM infinitely concerned, my ever dear and ever kind friend, that I am the sad occasion of the displeasure between your mother and you.—How many persons have I made unhappy!

Had I not to console myself, that my error is not owing to wicked precipitation, I should be the most miserable of all creatures. As it is, I am enough punished in the *loss of my character*, more valuable to me than my life; and in the *cruel doubts and perplexities* which, conflicting with my hopes, and each getting the victory by turns, harrow up my soul between them.

I think, however, that you should obey your mother, and decline a correspondence with me; at least for the present. Take care how you fall into my error; for that *begun with carrying on a prohibited correspondence;* a correspondence which I thought it in my power to discontinue at pleasure. My talent is scribbling; and I the readier fell into this freedom, as I found delight in writing; having motives too, which I thought laudable; and, at one time, the permission of all my friends, to write to him *.

* See Vol. I. p. 17, 18.

Yet as to this correspondence, what hurt could arise from it, if your mother could be prevailed upon to permit it to be continued?—So much prudence and discretion as you have; and you, in writing to me, lying under no temptation of following so bad an example, as I have set—my letters too occasionally filled with self-accusation.

I thank you, my dear, most cordially I thank you, for your kind offers. You may be assured, that I will sooner be beholden to you, than to any body living. To Mr. Lovelace the last. Do not therefore think, that by declining your favours, I have an intention to lay myself under obligation to him.

I am willing to hope (notwithstanding what you write) that my friends will send me my little money, together with my clothes. They are too considerate, some of them, at least, to permit that I should be put to such *low* difficulties. Perhaps, they will not be in haste to oblige me. But, if not, I cannot yet want. I believe you think, I must not dispute with Mr. Lovelace the expenses of the road and lodgings, till I can get a fixed abode. But I hope soon to put an end even to those sort of obligations.

Small hopes indeed of a reconciliation from your account of my uncle's visit to your mother, in order to set her against an almost-friendless creature whom once he loved! *But is it not my duty to try for it?* Ought I to widen my error by obstinacy and resentment, because of *their* resentment; which must appear reasonable to them, as they suppose my flight premeditated; and as they are made to believe, that I am capable of triumphing *in it*, and *over them*, with the *man they hate?* When I have done all in my power to restore myself to

their favour, I shall have the less to reproach myself with.

These considerations make me waver about following your advice, in relation to marriage; and the rather, as he is so full of complaisance with regard to my former conditions, which he calls my *injunctions*. Nor can I now, that my friends, as you inform me, have so strenuously declared *against accepting of the mediation of the ladies of Mr. Lovelace's family,* put myself into their protection, unless I am resolved to give up all hopes of a reconciliation with my own.

Yet if any happy introduction *could* be thought of to effect this desirable purpose, how shall terms be proposed to my father, while this man is with me, or near me? On the other hand, should they in his absence get me back by force (and this, you are of opinion, they would attempt to do, but in fear of him), how will their severest acts of compulsion be justified by my flight from them!—Meanwhile, to what censures, as you remind me, do I expose myself, while he and I are together, and unmarried!—Yet [can I with patience ask the question?] *is it in my power?*—O my dear Miss Howe! and am I so reduced, as that, to save the poor remains of my reputation in the world's eye, I must *watch the gracious motion* from the man's lips?

Were my cousin Morden in England, all might still perhaps be determined happily.

If no other mediation than his can be procured to set on foot the wished-for reconciliation, and if my situation with Mr. Lovelace alter not in the interim, I must endeavour to keep myself in a state of independence till he arrives, that I may be at liberty to govern myself by his advice and direction.

I will acquaint you, as you desire, with all that passes between Mr. Lovelace and me. Hitherto I have not discovered any thing in his behaviour that is *very* exceptionable. Yet I cannot say, that I think the respect he shows me, an easy, unrestrained, and natural respect, although I can hardly tell where the fault is.

But he has, doubtless, an arrogant and encroaching spirit. Nor is he so polite as his education, and other advantages, might have made one expect him to be. He seems, in short, to be one, who has always had too much of his own will to study to accommodate himself to that of others.

As to the placing of some confidence in him, I shall be as ready to take your advice in this particular, as in all others, and as he will be to deserve it. But *tricked away* as I was by him, not only *against my judgment, but my inclination,* can *he,* or *any body,* expect, that I should immediately treat him with complaisance, as if I acknowledged obligation to him for carrying me away?—If I did, must he not either think me a vile dissembler *before* he gained that point, or *afterwards?*

Indeed, indeed, my dear, I could tear my hair, on reconsidering what you write (as to the probability that the dreaded Wednesday was more dreaded than it needed to be) to think, that I should be thus tricked by this man; and that, in all likelihood, through his vile agent Joseph Leman. So premeditated and elaborate a wickedness as it must be! —Must I not, *with such a man,* be wanting *to myself,* if I were *not* jealous and vigilant?—Yet what a life to live for a spirit *so open,* and naturally *so unsuspicious,* as mine?

I am obliged to Mr. Hickman for the assistance he is so kindly ready to give to our correspondence. He is so *little likely* to make to himself an

additional merit with the *daughter* upon it, that I shall be very sorry, if he risk any thing with the *mother* by it.

I am now in a state of obligation: so must rest satisfied with whatever I cannot help. Whom have I the power, once so precious to me, of obliging? —What I mean, my dear, is, that I ought, perhaps, to expect, that my influences over you are weakened by my indiscretion. Nevertheless, I will not, if I can help it, *desert myself*, nor give up the privilege you used to allow me, of telling you what I think of such parts of your conduct as I may not approve.

You must permit me therefore, severe as your mother is against an undesigning offender, to say that I think your liveliness to her inexcusable—to pass over, for this time, what nevertheless concerns me not a little, the free treatment you almost *indiscriminately* give to my relations.

If you will not, for your *duty's sake*, forbear your tauntings and impatience, let me beseech you, that you will for *mine*.—Since otherwise, your mother may apprehend, that my example, like a leaven, is working itself into the mind of her beloved daughter. And may not such an apprehension give her an irreconcileable displeasure against me?

I inclose the copy of my letter to my sister, which you are desirous to see. You will observe, that although I have not demanded my estate in form, and of my trustees, yet that I have hinted at leave to retire to it. How joyfully would I keep my word, if they would accept of the offer I renew!—It was not proper I believe you will think, on many accounts, to own that I was carried off against my inclination. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever-obliged and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER VI.

TO MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE.

[*Inclosed to Miss* Howe, *in the preceding.*]

MY DEAR SISTER, St. Alban's, April 11.

I HAVE, I confess, been guilty of an action which carries with it a rash and undutiful appearance. And I should have thought it an inexcusable one, had I been used with less severity than I have been of late; and had I not had too great reason to apprehend, that I was to be made a sacrifice to a man I could not bear to think of. But what is done, is done—perhaps I could wish it had not; and that I had trusted to the relenting of my dear and honoured parents.—Yet this from no other motives, but those of duty to them.—To whom I am ready to return (if I may not be permitted to retire to *the Grove*) on conditions which I before offered to comply with.

Nor shall I be in any sort of dependence upon the person by whose means I have taken this *truly reluctant step*, inconsistent with any reasonable engagement I shall enter into, if I am not further precipitated. Let me not have it to say, now at this important crisis! that I have a sister, but not a friend in that sister. My reputation, dearer to me than life, (whatever you may imagine from the step I have taken) is suffering. A little lenity will, even yet, in a great measure, restore it, and make that pass for a temporary misunderstanding only, which otherwise will be a stain as durable as life, upon a creature who has already been treated with great *unkindness*, to use no harsher a word.

For your own sake, therefore, for my brother's sake, by whom (I must say) I have been thus precipitated, and for all the family's sake, aggravate not my fault, if, on recollecting every thing, you think it one; nor by widening the unhappy difference, expose a sister for ever—Prays

Your affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

I shall take it for a very great favour, to have my clothes directly sent me, together with fifty guineas, which you will find in my escritoire (of which I inclose the key); as also the divinity and miscellany classes of my little library; and, if it be thought fit, my jewels—Directed for *me*, to be left till called for, at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho-Square.

LETTER VII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Mr. Lovelace in continuation of his last letter, (No. iii.) *gives an account to his friend (pretty much to the same effect with the lady's) of all that passed between them at the Inns, in the journey, and till their fixing at Mrs. Sorlings'; to avoid repetition, those passages in his narrative are only extracted, which will serve to embellish hers; to open his views; or to display the humorous talent he was noted for.*

At their alighting at the inn at St. Alban's on Monday night, thus he writes:

The people who came about us, as we alighted, seemed by their jaw-fallen faces, and goggling

eyes, to wonder at beholding a charming young lady, majesty in her air and aspect, so composedly dressed, yet with features so discomposed, come off a journey which had made the cattle smoke, and the servants sweat. I read their curiosity in their faces, and my beloved's uneasiness in hers. She cast a conscious glance, as she alighted, upon her habit, which was *no habit;* and repulsively, as I may say, quitting my assisting hand, hurried into the house.* * *

Ovid was not a greater master of metamorphoses than thy friend. To the mistress of the house I instantly changed her into a sister, brought off by surprise from a near relation's (where she had wintered) to prevent her marrying a confounded rake [I love always to go as near the truth as I can] whom her father and mother, her elder sister, and all her loving uncles, aunts, and cousins abhorred. This accounted for my charmer's expected sullens; for her displeasure when she was to join me again, were it to hold; for her unsuitable dress upon the road; and, at the same time, gave her a proper and seasonable assurance of my honourable views.

Upon the debate between the lady and him, and particularly upon that part where she upbraids him with putting a young creature upon making a sacrifice of her duty and conscience, he writes:

All these, and still more mortifying things, she said.

I heard her in silence. But when it came to my turn, I pleaded, I argued, I answered her, as well as I could.—And when humility would not do, I raised my voice, and suffered my eye to sparkle with anger; hoping to take advantage of that sweet cowardice which is so amiable in the sex, and to

which my victory over this proud beauty is principally owing.

She was not intimidated, however, and was going to rise upon me in her temper; and would have broken in upon my defence. But when a man talks to a woman upon such subjects, let her be ever so much in *alt*, 'tis strange, if he cannot throw out a tub to the whale;—that is to say, if he cannot divert her from resenting one bold thing, by uttering two or three full as bold; but for which more favourable interpretations will lie.

To that part, where she tells him of the difficulty she made to correspond with him at first, thus he writes:

Very true, my precious!—And innumerable have been the difficulties thou hast made me struggle with. But one day thou mayest wish, that thou hadst spared this boast; as well as those other pretty haughtinesses. 'That thou didst not reject Solmes for *my* sake: that *my* glory, if I valued myself upon carrying thee off, was *thy* shame: that I have more merit with *myself* than with thee, or any body else: [*What a coxcomb she makes me, Jack!*] That thou wishest thyself in thy father's house again, *whatever were to be the consequence.*'—If I forgive thee, charmer, for these hints, for these reflections, for these wishes, for these contempts, I am not the Lovelace I have been reputed to be; and that thy treatment of me shows that thou thinkest I am.

In short, her whole air throughout this debate, expressed a majestic kind of indignation, which implied a believed superiority of talents over the person to whom she spoke.

Thou hast heard me often expatiate upon the pitiful figure a man must make, whose wife *has*, or

believes she has, more sense than himself. A thousand reasons could I give why I ought not to think of marrying Miss Clarissa Harlowe: at least till I can be sure, that she loves me with the preference I must expect from a wife.

I begin to stagger in my resolutions. Ever averse as I was to the hymeneal shackles, how easily will old prejudices recur! Heaven give me the heart to be honest to my Clarissa!—There's a prayer, Jack! If I should not be heard, what a sad thing would that be, for the most admirable of women!—Yet, as I do not often trouble heaven with my prayers, who knows but this may be granted?

But there lie before me such charming difficulties, such scenery for intrigue, for stratagem, for enterprise.—What a horrible thing, that my talents point all that way!—When I know what is honourable and just; and would almost wish to be honest?—*Almost* I say; for such a varlet am I, that I cannot altogether wish it, for the soul of me!—Such a triumph over the whole sex, if I can subdue this lady! My maiden vow, as I may call it!—For did not the sex begin with me?—And does this lady spare me? Thinkest thou, Jack, that I should have spared my Rosebud, had I been set at defiance thus?—Her grandmother besought me, at first, *to spare her Rosebud;* and when a girl is put, or puts herself into a man's power, what can he wish for *further?* while I always considered opposition and resistance as a challenge to do my worst*.

Why, why, will the dear creature take such pains to appear all ice to me?—Why will she, by *her* pride awaken *mine?*—Hast thou not seen, in

* See Vol. I. p. 250.

the above, how contemptuously she treats me?—What have I not suffered *for* her, and even *from* her?—Ought I to bear being told, that she will despise me, if I value myself above that odious Solmes?

Then she cuts me short in all my ardours. To *vow fidelity*, is by a cursed turn upon me, to show that there is reason, in my own opinion, for doubt of it. The very same reflection upon me once before *. In my power, or out of my power, all one to this lady.—So, Belford, my poor vows are crammed down my throat, before they can well rise to my lips. And what can a lover say to his mistress, if she will neither let him lie nor swear?

One little piece of artifice I had recourse to. When she pushed so hard for me to leave her, I made a request to her, upon a condition she could not refuse; and pretended as much gratitude upon her granting it, as if it were a favour of the last consequence.

And what was this? but to promise what she had before promised, 'Never to marry any other man, while I am living, and single, unless I should give her cause for high disgust against me.' This, you know, was promising nothing, because she could be offended at any time, and was to be the sole judge of the offence. But it showed her, how reasonable and just my expectations were; and that I was no encroacher.

She consented; and asked what security I expected? Her word only.

She gave me her word: but I besought her excuse for sealing it: and in the same moment (since to have waited for consent would have been asking for a denial) saluted her. And, believe me, or not,

* See Vol. II. p. 71.

but, as I hope to live, it was the first time I had the courage to touch her charming lips with mine. And this I tell thee, Belford, that that single pressure (as modestly put too, as if I were as much a virgin as herself, that she might not be afraid of me another time) delighted me more than ever I was delighted by the *ultimatum* with any other woman.—So precious do awe, reverence, and apprehended prohibition, make a favour!

And now, Belford, I am only afraid, that I shall be *too* cunning; for she does not at present talk enough for me. I hardly know what to make of the dear creature yet.

I topt the brother's part on Monday night before the landlady at St. Alban's; asking my sister's pardon for carrying her off so unprepared for a journey; prated of the joy my father and mother, and all our friends, would have on receiving her; and this with so many circumstances, that I perceived, by a look she gave me, that went through my very reins, that I had gone too far. I apologized for it indeed when alone; but could not penetrate for the soul of me, whether I made the matter better or worse by it.

But I am of too frank a nature: my success, and the joy I have because of the jewel I am half in possession of, has not only unlocked my bosom, but left the door quite open.

This is a confounded sly sex. Would she but speak out, as I do—But I must learn reserves of her.

She must needs be unprovided of money: but has too much pride to accept of any from me. I would have had her go to town [*To town, if possible, must I get her to consent to go*] in order to provide herself with the richest of silks which that can afford. But neither is this to be assented to.

And yet, as my intelligencer acquaints me, her implacable relations are resolved to distress her all they can.

These wretches have been most gloriously raving, ever since her flight; and still, thank heaven, continue to rave; and will, I hope, for a twelvemonth to come. Now, at last, it is my day!

Bitterly do they regret, that they permitted her poultry visits, and garden walks, which gave her the opportunity to effect an escape which they suppose pre-concerted. For, as to her dining in the ivy-bower, they had a cunning design to answer upon her in that permission, as Betty told Joseph her lover *.

They lost, they say, an excellent pretence for confining her *more* closely on my threatening to rescue her, if they offered to carry her against her will to old Antony's moated house †. For this, as I told thee at the Hart, and as I once hinted to the dear creature herself ‡, they had it in deliberation to do; apprehending, that I might attempt to carry her off, either with or without her consent, on some one of those connived-at excursions.

But here my honest Joseph, who gave me the information, was of admirable service to me. I had taught him to make the Harlowes believe, that I was as communicative to *my* servants, as their stupid James was to Joseph §: Joseph, as they supposed, by tampering with Will ||, got all my secrets, and was acquainted with all my mo-

* Vol. II. Letter xlvi. Paragr. 37, 38.
† See Vol. II. Let. xxxv. and Let. xxxviii. Par. 1.
‡ Ibid. Let. xxxv. Par. 4. See also Let. xiv. Par. 3.
§ Ibid Let. xlvi. Par. 6. and 39.
|| This will be further explained in Letter xvii. of this volume.

tions; and having also undertaken to watch all those of his young lady *, the wise family were secure; and so was my beloved; and so was I.

I once had it in my head (and I hinted it to thee † in a former) in case such a step should be necessary, to attempt to carry her off by surprise from the Wood-house; as it is remote from the dwelling-house. This had I attempted, I should certainly have effected, by the help of the confraternity: and it would have been an action worthy of us all.—But Joseph's conscience, as he called it, stood in my way; for he thought it must have been known to be done by his connivance. I could, I dare say, have overcome this scruple, *as easily as I did many of his others*, had I not depended at one time upon her meeting me at a midnight or late hour [and, if she had, she never would have gone back]; at other times, upon the cunning family's doing my work for me, equally against their knowledge, or their wills.

For well I knew, that James and Arabella were determined never to leave off their foolish trials and provocations, till, by tiring her out, they had either made her Solmes's wife, or guilty of some such rashness as should throw her for ever out of the favour of both her uncles; though they had too much malice in their heads to intend service to me by their persecutions of her.

* See Vol. I. p. 216, 254. † Ibid. p. 257.

LETTER VIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

In Continuation.

I OBLIGED the dear creature highly, I could perceive, by bringing Mrs. Greme to attend her, and to suffer that good woman's recommendation of lodgings to take place, on her refusal to go to *the Lawn*.

She must believe all my views to be honourable, when I had provided for her no particular lodgings, leaving it to her choice, whether she would go to M. Hall, to the Lawn, to London, or to either of the dowagers of my family.

She was visibly pleased with my motion of putting Mrs. Greme into the chaise with her, and riding on horseback myself.

Some people would have been apprehensive of what might pass between her and Mrs. Greme. But as all my relations either know or believe the justice of my intentions by her, I was in no pain on that account; and the less, as I have been always above hypocrisy, or wishing to be thought better than I am. And indeed, what occasion has a man to be an hypocrite, who has hitherto found his views upon the sex better answered, for his being known to be a rake? Why, even my beloved here denied not to correspond with me, though her friends had taught her to think me a libertine —Who then would be trying a *new* and *worse* character?

And then Mrs. Greme is a pious matron, and would not have been biassed against the truth on any consideration. She used formerly, while there were any hopes of my reformation, to pray for me. She hardly continues the good custom, I

doubt; for her worthy lord makes no scruple, occasionally to rave against me to man, woman, and child, as they come in his way. He is very undutiful, as thou knowest. Surely, I may say so; since all duties are reciprocal. But for Mrs. Greme, *poor woman!* when my lord has the gout, and is at the Lawn, and the chaplain not to be found, she prays by him, or reads a chapter to him in the Bible, or some other good book.

Was it not therefore right, to introduce such a good sort of woman to the dear creature; and to leave them, without reserve, to their own talk!—And very busy in talk I saw they were, as they rode; and *felt* it too; for most charmingly glowed my cheeks.

I hope I shall be honest, I once more say: but as we frail mortals are not our own masters at all times, I must endeavour to keep the dear creature unapprehensive, until I can get her to *our acquaintance's in London,* or to some *other safe place there.* Should I, in the interim, give her the least room for suspicion; or offer to restrain her; she can make her appeals to strangers, and call the country in upon me; and, perhaps, throw herself upon her relations on their own terms. And were I now to lose her, how unworthy should I be to be the prince and leader of such a con-fraternity as ours!—How unable to look up among men! or to show my face among women!

As things at present stand, she dare not own, that she went off against her own consent; and I have taken care to make all the *Implacables* believe, that she escaped *with* it.

She has received an answer from Miss Howe, to the letter written to her from St. Alban's *.

* Vol. II. Letter xlvii.

Whatever are the contents, I know not; but she was drowned in tears at the perusal of it. And I am the sufferer.

Miss Howe is a charming creature too; but confoundedly smart and spiritful. I am a good deal afraid of her. Her mother can hardly keep her in. I must continue to play off *old Antony*, by my *honest Joseph*, upon that mother, in order to manage that daughter, and oblige my beloved to an absolute dependence upon myself*.

Mrs. Howe is impatient of contradiction. So is Miss. A young lady who is sensible that she has all the maternal requisites herself, to be under maternal control;—fine ground for a man of intrigue to build upon!—A mother over-notable; a daughter over-sensible; and their Hickman, who is—over-neither: but merely a passive—

Only that I have an object still more desirable!—

Yet how unhappy, that these two young ladies lived so near each other, and are so well acquainted! Else how charmingly might I have managed them both!

But *one* man cannot have every woman worth having—pity though—when the man is such a VERY clever fellow!

LETTER IX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

In Continuation.

NEVER was there such a pair of scribbling lovers as we; yet perhaps whom it so much concerns to keep from each other what each writes. She

* See Vol. I. p. 216.

won't have any thing else to do. I *would*, if she'd let me. I am not reformed enough for a husband. —*Patience is a virtue*, Lord M. says. *Slow and sure*, is another of his sentences. If I had not a great deal of that virtue, I should not have waited the Harlowe's own time of ripening into execution my plots upon themselves and upon their goddess daughter.

My beloved has been writing to her saucy friend, I believe, all that has befallen her, and what has passed between us hitherto. She will possibly have fine subjects for her pen, if she be as minute as I am.

I would not be so barbarous as to permit old Antony to set Mrs. Howe against her, did I not dread the consequences of the correspondence between the two young ladies. So lively the one, so vigilant, so prudent both, who would not wish to outwit such girls, and to be able to twirl them round his finger?

My charmer has written to her sister for her clothes, for some gold, and for some of her books. What books can tell her more than she knows? But I can. So she had better study *me*.

She *may* write. She must be obliged to me at last with all her pride. Miss Howe indeed will be ready enough to supply her; but I question, whether she can do it without her mother, who is as covetous as the grave. And my agent's agent, old Antony, has already given the mother a hint which will make her jealous of *pecuniaries*.

Besides, if Miss Howe has money by her, I can put her mother upon borrowing it of her: nor blame me, Jack, for contrivances that have their foundation in generosity. Thou knowest my spirit; and that I should be proud to lay an obligation upon my charmer to the amount of half, nay,

to the whole, of my estate. Lord M. has more for me than I can ever wish for. My predominant passion is *girl*, not *gold*; nor value I *this*, but as it helps me to *that*, and gives me independence.

I was forced to put it into the sweet novice's head, as well for *my* sake as for *hers* (lest we should be traceable by *her* direction), whither to direct the sending of her clothes, if they incline to do her that small piece of justice.

If they do I shall begin to dread a reconciliation; and must be forced to muse for a contrivance or two, to prevent it; and *to avoid mischief*. For that (as I have told honest Joseph Leman) is a great point with me.

Thou wilt think me a sad fellow, I doubt. But are not all rakes sad fellows?—And art not thou, to thy little power, as bad as any? If thou dost all that's in thy head and in thy heart to do, thou art worse than I; for I do not, I assure thee.

I proposed, and she consented, that her clothes, or whatever else her relations should think fit to send her, should be directed to thy cousin Osgood's. Let a special messenger, at my charge, bring me any letter, or portable parcel, that shall come. If not portable, give me notice of it. But thou'lt have no trouble of this sort from her relations, I dare be sworn. And in this assurance, I will leave them, I think, to act upon their own heads. A man would have no more to answer for than needs must.

But one thing, while I think of it; *which is of great importance to be attended to*—you must hereafter write to me in character, as I shall do to you. It would be a confounded thing to be blown up by a train of my own laying. And who knows what opportunities a man in love may give against himself? In changing a coat or waistcoat, something

might be forgotten. I once suffered that way. Then for the sex's curiosity, it is but remembering, in order to guard against it, that the name of their common mother was Eve.

Another thing remember; I have changed my name: changed it without an act of parliament. 'Robert Huntingford' it is now. Continue *esquire*. It is a respectable addition, although every sorry fellow assumes it, almost to the banishment of the usual travelling one of *captain*. 'To be left till called for, at the post-house at Hertford.'

Upon naming thee, she asked thy character. I gave thee a better than thou deservest, in order to do credit to *myself*. Yet I told her, that thou wert an awkward fellow; and this to do credit to *thee*, that she may not, if ever she be to see thee, expect a cleverer man than she'll find. Yet thy *apparent* awkwardness befriends thee not a little: for wert thou a sightly mortal, people would discover nothing extraordinary in thee, when they conversed with thee: whereas, seeing a bear, they are surprised to find in thee any thing that is like a man. Felicitate thyself then upon thy defects; which are evidently thy principal perfections; and which occasion thee a distinction which otherwise thou wouldst never have.

The lodgings we are in at present are not convenient. I was so delicate as to find fault with them, as communicating with each other, because I knew *she* would; and told her, that were I sure she was safe from pursuit, I would leave her in them (since such was her earnest desire and expectation), and go to London.

She must be an infidel against all reason and appearances, if I do not banish even the *shadow* of mistrust from her heart.

Here are two young likely girls, daughters of the widow Sorlings; that's the name of our landlady.

I have only, at present, admired them in their dairy-works. How greedily do the sex swallow praise!—Did I not once in the streets of London, see a well-dressed handsome girl laugh, bridle, and visibly enjoy the praises of a sooty dog, a chimney-sweeper; who, with his empty sack cross his shoulder, after giving her the way, stopt, and held up his brush and shovel in admiration of her?—Egad, girl, thought I, I despise thee as Lovelace: but were I the chimney-sweeper, and could only contrive to get into thy presence, my life to thy virtue, I would have thee.

So pleased was I with the younger Sorlings, for the elegance of her works, that I kissed her, and she made me a courtesy for my condescension: and blushed, and seemed *sensible all over:* encouragingly, yet innocently, she adjusted her handkerchief, and looked towards the door, as much as to say, she would not tell, were I to kiss her again.

Her eldest sister popt upon her. The conscious girl blushed again, and looked so confounded, that I made an excuse for her, which gratified both. Mrs. Betty, said I, I have been so much pleased with the neatness of your dairy-works, that I could not help saluting your sister: you have *your* share of merit in them, I am sure—give me leave——

Good souls!—I like them both—she courtesied too!—How I love a grateful temper! O that my Clarissa were but half so acknowledging!

I think I must get one of them to attend my charmer when she removes—the mother seems to be a notable woman. She had not best, however, be *too* notable: since, were she by suspicion

to give a face of difficulty to the matter, it would prepare me for a trial with one or both the daughters.

Allow me a little rodomontade, Jack—but really and truly my heart is fixed. I can think of no creature breathing of the sex, but my Gloriana.

LETTER X.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

In Continuation.

This is Wednesday; the day that I was to have lost my charmer for ever to the hideous Solmes! With what high satisfaction and heart's-ease can I now sit down, and triumph over my men in straw at Harlowe Place! Yet 'tis perhaps best for them, that she got off as she did. Who knows what consequences might have followed upon my attending her in; or (if she had not met me) upon my projected visit, followed by my myrmidons?

But had I even gone in with her unaccompanied, I think I had but little reason for apprehension: for well thou knowest, that *the tame spirits* which value themselves upon reputation, and are held within the skirts of the law by political considerations only, may be compared to an infectious spider; which will run into his hole the moment one of his threads is touched by a finger that can crush him, leaving all his toils defenceless and to be brushed down at the will of the potent invader. While a silly fly that has neither courage nor strength to resist, no sooner gives notice, by its buz and its struggles, of its being entangled, but out steps the self-circumscribed tyrant, winds

round and round the poor insect, till he covers it with his bowel-spun toils; and when so fully secured, that it can neither move leg nor wing, suspends it, as if for a spectacle to be exulted over: then stalking to the door of his cell, turns about, glotes over it at a distance; and, sometimes advancing, sometimes retiring, preys at leisure upon its vitals.

But now I think of it, will not this comparison do as well for the *entangled girls*, as for the *tame spirits?*—Better o' my conscience!—'Tis but comparing the spider to us brave fellows; and it *quadrates.*

Whatever our hearts are in, our heads will follow. Begin with *spiders*, with *flies*, with what we will, girl is the centre of gravity, and we all naturally tend to it.

Nevertheless, to recur: I cannot but observe, that these *tame spirits* stand a poor chance in a fairly offensive war with such of us mad fellows, as are above all law, and scorn to sculk behind the hypocritical screen of reputation.

Thou knowest, that I never scruple to throw myself amongst numbers of adversaries; the more the safer: one or two, no fear, will take the part of a single adventurer, if not *intentionally*, in *fact;* holding him in, while others hold in the principal antagonist, to the augmentation of their mutual prowess, till both are prevailed upon to compromise, or one to absent: so that upon the whole, the law-breakers have the advantage of the law-keepers, all the world over; at least for a time, and till they have run to the end of their race. Add to this, in the question between me and the Harlowes, that the whole family of them must know that they have injured me—must therefore be afraid of me. Did they not, at their own church,

cluster together like bees, when they saw me enter it? nor knew they which should venture out first, when the service was over.

James, indeed, was not there. If he had, he would perhaps have endeavoured to *look* valiant. But there is a sort of valour in the *face*, which by its over bluster shows fear in the *heart*: just such a face would James Harlowe's have been, had I made them a visit.

When I have had such a face and such a heart as I have described to deal with, I have been all calm and serene, and left it to the friends of the blusterer (as I have done to the Harlowes) to do my work for me.

I am about mustering up in my memory, all that I have ever done, that has been thought praiseworthy, or but barely tolerable. I am afraid thou canst not help me to many remembrances of this sort; because I never was so bad as since I have known thee.

Have I not had it in my heart to do *some* good that thou canst remind me of? Study for me, Jack. I have recollected some instances which I think will *tell in*—but see if thou canst not help me to some which I may have forgot.

This I may venture to say, that the principal blot in my escutcheon is owing to these girls, these confounded girls. But for *them*, I could go to church with a good conscience: but when I do, there they are. Everywhere does Satan spread his snares for me: but, now I think of it, what if our governors should appoint churches for the *women* only, and others for the *men*?—Full as proper, I think, for the promoting of *true piety* in both [much better than the Synagogue-lattices] as separate boarding-schools for their *education*.

There are already male and female dedications of churches.

St. Swithin's, St. Stephen's, St. Thomas's, St. George's, and so forth, might be appropriated to the men; and Santa Catharina's, Santa Anna's, Santa Maria's, Santa Margaretta's, for the women.

Yet, were it so, and life to be the forfeiture of being found at the female churches, I believe that I, like a second Clodius, should change my dress, to come at my Portia or Pompeia, though one the daughter of a Cato, the other the wife of a Cæsar.

But how I *excurse!*—Yet thou usedst to say, thou likedst my excursions. If thou dost, thou'lt have enow of them: for I never had a subject I so much adored; and with which I shall probably be compelled to have so much patience before I strike the blow: if the blow I do strike.

But let me call myself back to my *recordation* subject—Thou needest not remind me of my *Rose-bud.* I have her in my head; and moreover have contrived to give my fair-one an hint of that affair, by the agency of honest Joseph Leman*; although I have not reaped the hoped-for credit of her acknowledgment.

That's the devil; and it was always my hard fate—every thing I do that is good, is but as I *ought!*—every thing of a contrary nature is brought into the most glaring light against me—is this fair? ought not a balance to be struck; and the credit carried to my account?—Yet I must own too, that I half grudge Johnny this blooming maiden; for, in truth, I think a fine woman too rich a jewel to hang about a poor man's neck.

Surely, Jack, if I am guilty of a fault in my

* See Vol. II. p. 125, 165.

universal adorations of the sex, the *women* in general ought to love me better for it.

And so they do, I thank them heartily; except here and there a covetous little rogue comes cross me, who, under the pretence of loving virtue for its own sake, wants to have me all to herself.

I have rambled enough.

Adieu, for the present.

LETTER XI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday night, April 13.

I ALWAYS loved writing, and my unhappy situation gives me now enough of it; and you, I fear, too much. I have had another very warm debate with Mr. Lovelace. It brought on the subject which you advised me not to decline, when it handsomely offered. And I want to have either your acquittal or blame for having suffered it to go off without effect.

The impatient wretch sent up to me several times, while I was writing my last to you, to desire my company: yet his business nothing particular; only to hear *him* talk. The man seems pleased with his own volubility; and, whenever he has collected together abundance of smooth things, he wants me to find an ear for them! Yet he need not; for I don't often gratify him either with giving him the praise for his verboseness, or showing the pleasure in it, that he would be fond of.

When I had finished the letter, and given it to Mr. Hickman's friend, I was going up again, and

had got up half a dozen stairs; when he besought me to stop, and hear what he had to say.

Nothing, as I said, to any new purpose had he to offer; but complainings; and those in a manner, and with an air, as I thought, that bordered upon insolence. He could not live, he told me, unless he had more of my company, and of my *indulgence* too, than I had yet given him.

Hereupon I stept down, and into the parlour, not a little out of humour with him; and the more, as he has very *quietly taken up his quarters here*, without talking of removing, as he had promised.

We began instantly our angry conference. He provoked me; and I repeated several of the plainest things I had said in our former conversations; and particularly told him, that I was every hour more and more dissatisfied with myself, and with him: that he was not a man, who, in my opinion, improved upon acquaintance: and that I should not be *easy till he had left me to myself.*

He might be surprised at my warmth, perhaps: but really the man looked so like a simpleton, hesitating, and having nothing to say for himself, or that should excuse the peremptoriness of his demand upon me (when he knew I had been writing a letter which a gentleman waited for), that I flung from him, declaring, that I would be mistress of my own time, and of my own actions, and not be called to account for either.

He was very uneasy till he could again be admitted into my company, and when I was obliged to see him, which was sooner than I liked, never did man put on a more humble and respectful demeanour.

He told me, that he had, upon this occasion, been entering into himself, and had found a great deal of reason to blame himself for an impatiency

and inconsideration, which, although he meant nothing by it, must be very disagreeable to one of my delicacy. That having always aimed at a *manly sincerity* and *openness of heart*, he had not till now discovered, that both were very consistent with that *true* politeness, which he feared he had too much disregarded, while he sought to avoid the contrary extreme; knowing, that in me he had to deal with a lady, who despised an hypocrite, and who was above all flattery. But from this time forth, I should find such an alteration in his whole behaviour, as might be expected from a man who knew himself to be honoured with the presence and conversation of a person, *who had the most delicate mind in the world*—that was his flourish.

I said, that he might perhaps expect congratulation upon the discovery he had just now made, to wit, that *true politeness* and *sincerity* were reconcilable: but that I, who had, by a perverse fate, been thrown into his company, had abundant reason to regret that he had no sooner found this out. —Since, I believed, very few men of *birth* and *education* were strangers to it.

He knew not, *neither*, that he had so badly behaved himself, as to deserve so very severe a rebuke.

Perhaps not, I replied: but he might, if so, make another discovery from what I had said; which might be to *my own* disadvantage: since, if he had so much reason to be satisfied with *himself*, he would see what an ungenerous person he spoke to, who, when he seemed to give himself airs of humility, which, perhaps, he thought beneath him to assume, had not the civility to make him a compliment upon them; but was ready to take him at his word.

He had long, with infinite pleasure, the pretended

flattery-hater said, admired my *superior* talents, and a wisdom in so young a lady, perfectly surprising.

Let me, madam, said he, stand ever so low in your opinion. I shall believe all you say to be just; and that I have nothing to do, but to govern myself for the future by your example, and by the standard you shall be pleased to give me.

I know better, sir, replied I, than to value myself upon your volubility of speech. As you pretend to pay so preferable a regard to sincerity, you should confine yourself to the strict rules of truth, when you speak of me, to myself: and then, although you shall be so kind as to imagine you have *reason* to make me a compliment, you will have much more to pride yourself in those arts which have made so *extraordinary* a young creature so great a fool.

Really, my dear, the man deserves not politer treatment.—And then has he not made a fool, an egregious fool of me?—I am afraid he himself thinks he has.

I am surprised! I am amazed, madam, returned he, at so strange a turn upon me!—I am very unhappy, that nothing I can do or say will give you a good opinion of me!—Would to heaven that I knew what I *can* do to obtain the honour of your confidence!

I told him, *that I desired his absence*, of all things. I saw not, I said, that my friends thought it worth their while to give me disturbance: therefore, if he would set out for London, or Berkshire, or whither he pleased, it would be most agreeable to me, and most reputable too.

He would do so, he *intended to do so*, the moment I was in a place to my liking—in a place convenient for me.

This, sir, will be so, when you are not here to

break in upon me, and make the apartments inconvenient.

He did not think this place safe, he replied; and as I intended not to stay here, he had not been so solicitous, as otherwise he should have been, to enjoin privacy to his servants, nor, to Mrs. Greme at her leaving me; and there were two or three gentlemen in the neighbourhood, he said, with whose servants his gossiping fellows had scraped acquaintance: so that he could not think of leaving me here unguarded and unattended.—But fix upon any place in England where I could be out of danger, and he would go to the furthermost part of the king's dominions, if by doing so he could make me easy.

I told him plainly that I should never be in humour with myself for *meeting him;* nor with him, for *seducing me away:* that my regrets increased, instead of diminished: that my reputation was wounded: that nothing I could do would now retrieve it: and that he must not wonder, if I every hour grew more and more uneasy both with myself and him: that upon the whole, I was willing to take care of myself; and when *he* had left me, I should best know what to resolve upon, and whither to go.

He wished he were at liberty, without giving me offence, or being thought to intend to *infringe the articles I had stipulated and insisted upon,* to make one humble proposal to me. But the *sacred regard* he was determined *to pay to all my injunctions* (reluctantly as I had on Monday last put it into his power to serve me) would not permit him to make it, unless I would promise to excuse him, if I did not approve of it.

I asked, in some confusion, what he would say?

He prefaced and paraded on; and then out came,

with great diffidence, and many apologies, and a bashfulness which sat very awkwardly upon him, a proposal of speedy solemnization: which, he said, would put all right; and make my first three or four months (which otherwise must be passed in obscurity and apprehension) a round of visits and visitings to and from all his relations; to Miss Howe; to whom I pleased: and would pave the way to the reconciliation I had so much at heart.

Your advice had great weight with me just then, as well as *his reasons*, and the consideration of my *unhappy situation*: but what could I say? I wanted somebody to speak for me.

The man saw I was not angry at his motion. I only blushed; and that I am sure I did up to the ears; and looked silly, and like a fool.

He wants not courage. Would he have had me catch at his first, at his *very* first word?—I was *silent* too—and do not the bold sex take silence for a mark of a favour?—Then, *so lately* in my father's house! Having also declared to him in my letters, before I had your advice, that I would not think of marriage till he had passed through a state of probation, as I may call it—how was it possible I could encourage, with *very* ready signs of approbation, such an early proposal? especially so soon after the free treatment he had provoked from me. If I were to die, I could not.

He looked at me with great confidence; as if (notwithstanding his contradictory bashfulness) he would look me through: while my eye but now-and-then could glance at him—he begged my pardon with great humility: he was *afraid* I would think he deserved no other answer, but that of a *contemptuous silence*. True love was fearful of offending [take care, Mr. Lovelace, thought I, how your's is tried by that rule]. Indeed so *sacred a*

regard [foolish man!] would he have *to all my declarations made before I honoured him*—

I would hear him no further; but withdrew in a confusion *too visible*, and left him to make his nonsensical flourishes to himself.

I will only add, that, if he really wishes for a speedy solemnization, he never could have had a luckier time to press for my consent to it. But he let it go off; and indignation has taken place of it. And now it shall be a point with me, to get him at a distance from me.

I am, my dearest friend,
Your ever faithful and obliged
CL. H.

LETTER XII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday, April 13.

WHY, Jack, thou needest not make such a *wonderment*, as the girls say, if I should have taken large strides already towards reformation: for dost thou not see, that while I have been so assiduously, night and day, pursuing this single charmer, I have infinitely less to answer for, than otherwise I should have had? Let me see, how many days and nights?—Forty, I believe, after open trenches, spent in the sap only, and never a mine sprung yet!

By a moderate computation, a dozen kites might have fallen, while I have been only trying to ensnare this single lark. Nor yet do I see when I shall be able to bring her to my lure: more innocent days yet, therefore!—But reformation for my

stalking-horse, I hope, will be a sure, though a slow method to effect all my purposes.

Then, Jack, *thou* wilt have a merit too in engaging my pen, since thy time would be otherwise worse employed: and, after all, who knows but by creating new habits, at the expense of the old, a real reformation may be brought about? I have promised it; and I believe there is a pleasure to be found in being good, reversing that of Nat. Lee's madman,

—Which none but good men know.

By all this, seest thou not, how greatly preferable it is, on twenty accounts, to pursue a difficult, rather than an easy chase? I have a desire to inculcate this pleasure upon thee, and to teach thee to fly at nobler game than daws, crows, and wigeons: I have a mind to show thee from time to time, in the course of the correspondence thou hast so earnestly wished me to begin on this illustrious occasion, that these exalted ladies may be abased, and to obviate one of the objections that thou madest to me, when we were last together, that the pleasure which attends these nobler aims, remunerates not the pains they bring with them; since, like a paltry fellow as thou wert, thou assertedst that all women are alike.

Thou knowest nothing, Jack, of the delicacies of intrigue: nothing of the glory of outwitting the witty and the watchful: of the joys that fill the mind of the inventive or contriving genius, ruminating which to use of the different webs that offer to him for the entanglement of a haughty charmer, who in her day has given him unnumbered torments.—Thou, Jack, who, like a dog at his ease, contentest thyself to growl over a bone thrown

out to thee, dost not know the joys of a chase, and in pursuing a winding game: these I will endeavour to rouse thee to, and thou wilt have reason doubly and trebly to thank me, as well because of thy present delight, as with regard to thy prospects beyond the moon.

To this place I had written, purely to amuse myself, before I was admitted to my charmer. But now I have to tell thee, that I was quite right in my conjecture, that she would set up for herself, and dismiss me: for she has declared in so many words, that such was her resolution: and why? Because, to be plain with me, the more she saw of *me*, and of *my ways*, the less she liked of either.

This cut me to the heart!—I did not cry, indeed!—Had I been a *woman*, I should though, and that most plentifully: but I pulled out a white cambrick handkerchief: *that* I could command, but not my *tears*.

She finds fault with my protestations; with my professions; with my vows: I cannot curse a servant, the only privilege a master is known by, but I am supposed to be a trooper *—I must not say, by my soul; nor, as I hope to be saved. Why, Jack, how particular this is! Would she not have me think, I have a precious soul, as well as she?—If she thinks my salvation hopeless, what a *devil* [another exceptionable word!] does she propose to reform me for?—So I have not an ardent expression left me.

* * *

What can be done with a woman who is above flattery, and despises all praise but that which flows from the approbation of her own heart?

Well, Jack, thou seest it is high time to change

* See p. 21.

my measures. I must run into the *pious* a little faster than I had designed.

What a sad thing would it be, were I, after all, to lose her person, as well as her opinion! the only time that further acquaintance, and no blow struck nor suspicion given, ever lessened me in a lady's favour!—A cursed mortification!—'Tis certain I can have no pretence for holding her, if she will go.—No such thing as force to be used, or so much as hinted at!—Lord send us safe at London!—That's all I have for it now: and yet it must be the least part of my speech.

But why will this admirable creature urge her destiny? Why will she defy the power she is absolutely dependent upon? Why will she still wish to my face, that she had never left her father's house? Why will she deny me her company, till she makes me lose my patience, and lay myself open to her resentment? And why, when she is offended, does she carry her indignation to the utmost length that a scornful beauty, in the *very height* of her *power* and *pride*, can go?

Is it prudent, thinkest thou, in *her* circumstances, to tell me, *repeatedly* to tell me, 'That she is every hour more and more dissatisfied with herself and me? That I am not one, who improve upon her in my conversation and address?' [Couldst *thou*, Jack, bear this from a captive?] 'That she shall not be easy while she is with me? That she was thrown upon me by a perverse fate? That she knows better than to value herself upon my volubility? That if I think she deserves the compliments I make her, I may pride myself in those arts, by which I have made a fool of so extraordinary a person? That she shall never forgive herself for *meeting me*, nor me for *seducing* her away?' [*her very words*] 'That her regrets increase instead of

diminish? That she will take care of herself; and since her friends think it not worth while to pursue her, she will be left to her own care? That I shall make Mrs. Sorlings's house more agreeable by my absence?—And go to Berks, to town, or wherever I will' [to the devil, I suppose] 'with all her heart?'

The impolitic charmer!—To a temper so vindictive as she thinks mine! To a freeliver, as she believes me to be, who has her in his power! I was *before*, as thou knowest, balancing; now this scale, now that, the heaviest. I only waited to see how *her* will would work, how *mine* would lead me on. Thou seest what bias hers takes—and wilt thou doubt that mine will be determined by it? Were not her faults, before this, numerous enough? Why will she put me upon looking back?

I will sit down to argue with myself by-and-by, and thou shalt be acquainted with the result.

If thou didst but know, if thou hadst but beheld, what an abject slave she made me look like! I had given myself high airs, as *she* called them: but they were airs that showed my love for her: that showed I could not live out of her company. But she took me down with a vengeance! She made me look about me. So much advantage had she over me; such severe turns upon me; by my soul, Jack, I had hardly a word to say for myself. I am ashamed to tell thee, what a poor creature she made me look like! But I could have told her something that would have humbled her pretty pride at the instant, had she been in a *proper* place, and *proper* company about her.

To such a place then—and where she cannot fly me—and *then* to see how my will works, and what can be done by the *amorous see-saw*; now humble, now proud; now expecting, or demanding; now

submitting, or acquiescing—till I have tired resistance.

But these hints are at present enough. I may further explain myself as I go along; and as I confirm or recede in my future motions. If she *will* revive past disobligations! If she *will*—but no more, no more, as I said, *at present*, of threatenings.

LETTER XIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

In Continuation.

And do I not see that I shall need nothing but patience, in order to have all power with me? For what shall we say, if all these complaints of a character wounded; these declarations of increasing regrets for meeting me; of resentments never to be got over for my *seducing* her away; these angry commands to leave her:—what shall we say, if all were to mean nothing but MATRIMONY? And what if my forbearing to enter upon that subject come out to be the true cause of her petulance and uneasiness!

I had once before played about the skirts of the irrevocable obligation; but thought myself obliged to speak in clouds, and to run away from the subject, as soon as she took my meaning, lest she should imagine it to be *ungenerously urged*, now she was in some sort in my power, as she had forbid me beforehand, to touch upon it, till I were in a state of visible reformation, and till a reconciliation with her friends was probable. But now, out-argued, out-talented, and pushed so vehemently *to leave* one whom I had no good pretence to *hold*, if

she *would* go; and who could so easily, if I had given her cause to doubt, have thrown herself into other protection, or have returned to Harlowe Place and Solmes; I spoke out upon the subject, and offered reasons, although with infinite doubt and hesitation. [*lest she should be offended at me,* Belford!] why she should assent to the legal tie, and make me the happiest of men. And O how the blushing cheek, the downcast eye, the silent, yet trembling lip, and the heaving bosom, a sweet collection of heightened beauties, gave evidence, that the tender was not mortally offensive!

Charming creature! thought I [*but I charge thee, that thou let not any of the sex know my exultation* *] is it so *soon* come to this?—Am I *already* lord of the destiny of a Clarissa Harlowe?—Am I *already* the reformed man thou resolvest I *should* be, before I had the *least* encouragement given me? Is it thus, that *the more thou knowest me, the less thou seest reason to approve of me?*—And can art and design enter into a breast so celestial? To banish me from thee, to insist so rigorously upon my absence, in order to bring me closer to thee, and make the blessing dear?—Well do *thy* arts justify *mine;* and encourage me to let loose my plotting genius upon thee.

But let me tell thee, charming maid, if thy wishes are at all to be answered, that thou hast yet to account to me for thy reluctance to go off with me, at a crisis when thy going off was neces-

* Mr. Lovelace might have spared this caution on this occasion, since many of the sex [we mention it with regret] who on the first publication had read thus far, and even to the lady's first escape, have been readier to censure her for over-niceness, as we have observed in a former note, page 13, than him for artifices and exultations not less cruel and ungrateful, than ungenerous and unmanly.

sary to avoid being forced into the nuptial fetters with a wretch, that were he not thy aversion, thou wert no more honest to thy own merit, than to me.

I am *accustomed* to be preferred, let me tell thee, by thy equals in rank too, though thy inferiors in merit; but who is not so? And shall I marry a woman, who has given me reason to doubt the preference she has for me?

No, my dearest love, I have too sacred a regard for thy *injunctions*, to let them be broken through, even by thyself. Nor will I take in thy full meaning by blushing silence only. Nor shalt thou give me room to doubt, whether it be necessity or love, that inspires this condescending impulse.

Upon these principles, what had I to do, but to construe her silence into contemptuous displeasure? And I begged her pardon for making a motion, which I had so much *reason* to fear would offend her: for the future *I would pay a sacred* regard to her *previous injunctions*, and prove to her by all my conduct the truth of that observation, that true love is always fearful of offending.

And what could the lady say to this? methinks thou askest.

Say!—Why she looked vexed, disconcerted, teased; was at a loss, as I thought, whether to be more angry with herself, or with me. She turned about, however, as if to hide a starting tear: and drew a sigh into two or three but just audible quavers, trying to suppress it, and withdrew—leaving me master of the field.

Tell me not of politeness: tell me not of generosity: tell me not of compassion—is she not a match for me? *More* than a match! Does she not out-do me at every fair weapon? Has she not

made me doubt her love? Has she not taken officious pains to declare that she was not averse to Solmes for any respect she had to me? and her sorrow for putting herself out of *his* reach; that is to say, for meeting me?

Then what a triumph would it be to the *Harlowe pride*, were I now to marry this lady? A family beneath my own! No one in it worthy of an alliance with, but her! My own estate not contemptible! Living within the bounds of it, to avoid dependence upon *their* betters, and obliged to no man living! My expectations still so much *more* considerable! My person, my talents—not to be despised, surely—yet rejected by them with scorn. Obliged to carry on an underhand address to their daughter, when two of the most considerable families in the kingdom have made overtures, which I have declined, partly for her sake, and partly because I never will marry, if *she* be not the person. To be forced to *steal* her away; not only from *them*, but from *herself*! and must I be brought to implore forgiveness and reconciliation from the Harlowes?—Beg to be acknowledged as the *son* of a gloomy tyrant; whose only boast is his riches? As a *brother* to a wretch, who has conceived immortal hatred to me; and to a sister who was beneath my attempts, or I would have had her *in my own way*, and that with a tenth part of the trouble and pains that her sister has cost me; and, finally, as a *nephew* to uncles, who valuing themselves upon their *acquired* fortunes, would insult me as creeping to them on that account?—Forbid it the blood of the Lovelaces, that your *last*, and, let me say, not the *meanest* of your stock, should thus creep, thus fawn, thus lick the dust, for a WIFE!—

Proceed anon.

LETTER XIV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

In Continuation.

But is it not the divine Clarissa [*Harlowe* let me not say; my soul spurns them all but her] whom I am thus by implication threatening? If virtue be the true nobility, how is she ennobled, and how would an alliance with her ennoble, were not contempt due to the family from which she sprung, and prefers to me!

But again, let me stop.—Is there not something wrong, *has* there not been something wrong, in this divine creature? And will not the reflections upon that wrong (what though it may be construed in *my favour**?) make me unhappy, when *novelty* has lost its charms, and when, mind and person, she is all my own? Libertines are nicer, if *at all* nice, than other men. They seldom meet with the stand of virtue in the women whom they attempt. And by the frailty of those they have triumphed over, they judge of all the rest. '*Importunity* and *opportunity* no woman is proof against, especially from the persevering lover, who knows how to suit temptations to inclinations:' this, thou knowest, is a prime article of the rake's creed.

And what? (methinks thou askest with surprise) dost thou question this most admirable of women?—The virtue of a Clarissa dost thou question?

I do not, I dare not question it. My reverence

* The particular attention of such of the fair sex, as are more apt to read for the sake of amusement, than instruction, is requested to this letter of Mr. Lovelace.

for her will not let me *directly* question it. But let me, in my turn, ask thee—Is not, may not her virtue be founded rather in *pride* than in *principle?* Whose daughter is she?—And is she not a *daughter?* If impeccable, how came she by her impeccability? The pride of setting an example to her sex has run away with her hitherto, and may have made her till *now* invincible. But is not that pride abated?—What may not both *men* and *women* be brought to do, in a *mortified state?* What mind is superior to calamity? Pride is perhaps the principal bulwark of female virtue. Humble a woman, and may she not be *effectually* humbled?

Then who says, Miss Clarissa Harlowe is the paragon of virtue?—Is virtue itself?

All who know her, and have heard of her, it will be answered.

Common bruit!—Is virtue to be established by common bruit only?—Has her virtue ever been *proved?*—Who has dared to try her virtue?

I told thee, I would sit down to argue with myself; and I have drawn myself into argumentation before I was aware.

Let me enter into a strict discussion of this subject.

I know how ungenerous an appearance what I *have* said, and what I have *further* to say, on this topic, will have from *me:* but am I not bringing virtue to the touchstone, with a view to exalt it, if it come out to be proof?—'Avaunt then, for one moment, all consideration that may arise from a weakness which some would miscal *gratitude;* and is often times the corrupter of a heart not ignoble!'

To the test then—and I will bring this charming creature to the *strictest* test, 'that all the sex, who may be shown any passages in my letters' [and I

know thou cheerest the hearts of all thy acquaintance with such detached parts of mine, as tend not to dishonour characters, or reveal names: and this gives me an appetite to oblige thee by *interlardment*] *that all the sex,* 'I say, may see what they *ought to be*; what is *expected* from them; and if they have to deal with a person of reflection and punctilio [of *pride,* if thou wilt], how careful they ought to be, by a regular and uniform conduct, not to give him cause to think lightly of them for favours granted, which may be interpreted into *natural weakness.* For is not a wife the keeper of a man's honour? And do not her faults bring more disgrace upon a husband, than even upon herself?'

It is not for nothing, Jack, that I have disliked the life of shackles.

To the test then, as I said, since now I have the question brought home to me, whether I am to have a wife? And whether she be to be a wife at the *first* or at the *second* hand?

I will proceed fairly. I will do the dear creature not only strict, but generous justice; for I will try her by her own judgment, as well as by our principles.

She blames herself for having corresponded with me, a man of free character; and one indeed whose *first* view it was to draw her into this correspondence; and who succeeded in it, by means unknown to herself.

'Now, what were her inducements to this correspondence?' If not what her niceness makes her *think* blameworthy, why does she blame herself?

Has she been *capable* of error? Of persisting in that error?

Whoever was the *tempter,* that is not the thing; nor what the *temptation.* The *fact,* the *error,* is now before us.

Did she persist in it against parental prohibition? She owns she did.

Was a daughter ever known who had higher notions of the filial duty, of the parental authority?

Never.

'What must be those inducements, how strong, that were *too strong* for duty, in a daughter so *dutiful*?—What must *my* thoughts have been of these inducements, what *my* hopes built upon them *at the time*, taken in this light?'

Well, but it will be said, that her principal view was to prevent mischief between her brother and her other friends, and the man vilely insulted by them all.

But why should *she* be more concerned for the safety of others than they were for their own? And had not the *rencounter* then happened? 'Was a person of virtue to be prevailed upon to break through her *apparent*, her *acknowledged* duty, upon *any* consideration?' And, if not, was she to be so prevailed upon to prevent an *apprehended* evil only?

Thou, Lovelace, the tempter (thou wilt again break out and say) to be the accuser!

But I am *not* the accuser. I am the arguer only, and, in my heart, all the time acquit and worship the divine creature. 'But let me, nevertheless, examine, whether the acquittal be owing to her *merit*, or to my *weakness*—weakness the true name for love!'

But shall we suppose another motive?—And that is LOVE; a motive which all the world will excuse her for. 'But let me tell all the world that do, *not* because they *ought*, but because all the world is apt to be misled by it.'

Let LOVE then be the motive:—love of *whom*?

A *Lovelace*, is the answer.

'Is there but *one* Lovelace in the world? May not *more* Lovelaces be attracted by so fine a figure? By such exalted qualities? It was her character that drew me to her: and it was her beauty and good sense, that rivetted my chains: and now all together make me think her a subject worthy of my attempts; worthy of my ambition.'

But has she had the candour, the openness, to *acknowledge* that love?

She has not.

'Well then, if love be at the bottom, is there not another fault lurking beneath the shadow of that love?—Has she not *affectation?*—Or is it *pride of heart?*'

And what results?—'Is then the divine Clarissa capable of *loving* a man whom she ought *not* to love? And is she capable of *affectation?* And is her virtue founded in *pride?*—And, if the answer to these questions be affirmative, must she not then be a *woman?*'

And can she keep this love at bay? Can she make *him*, who has been accustomed to triumph over other women, tremble? Can she so conduct herself, as to make him, at times, question whether she loves *him* or *any* man; 'yet not have the requisite command over the passion itself in steps of the highest consequence to her honour, as *she* thinks' [*I am trying her*, Jack, *by her own thoughts*], 'but suffer herself to be provoked to promise to abandon her father's house, and go off with him; knowing his character; and even conditioning not to marry till improbable and remote contingencies were to come to pass? What though the provocations were such as would justify any other woman; yet was a Clarissa to be susceptible to provocations which she thinks *herself* highly censurable for being so much moved by?'

But let us see the dear creature resolved to revoke her promise; yet *meeting* her lover; a bold and intrepid man, who was more than once before disappointed by her; and who comes, as she knows, prepared to expect the fruits of her appointment, and resolved to carry her off. And let us see him actually carrying her off; and having her at his mercy—' May there not be, I repeat, *other* Lovelaces; other *like* intrepid persevering enterprisers; although they may not go to work in the same way?

' And has then a CLARISSA (herself her judge) failed?—In such *great* points failed?—And may she not *further* fail?—Fail in the *greatest* point, to which all the other points, in which she *has* failed, have but a natural tendency?'

Nor say thou, that virtue, in the eye of heaven, is as much a *manly* as a *womanly* grace. By virtue in this place I mean chastity, and to be superior to temptation; my Clarissa out of the question. Nor ask thou, shall the man be guilty, yet expect the woman to be guiltless, and even unsuspectable? Urge thou not these arguments, I say, since the wife, by a failure, may do much more injury to the husband, than the husband can do to the wife, and not only to her husband, but to all his family, by obtruding another man's children into his possessions, perhaps to the exclusion of (at least to a participation with) his own; he believing them all the time to be his. In the eye of heaven, therefore, the sin *cannot* be equal. Besides, I have read in some place *that the woman was made for the man*, not *the man for the woman*. Virtue then is less to be dispensed with in the woman than in the man.

Thou, Lovelace, (methinks some better man than thyself will say) to expect such perfection in a woman!

Yes, I, may I answer. Was not the great Cæsar a great rake as to women? Was he not called, by his very soldiers, on one of his triumphant entries into Rome, *the bald-pated lecher?* and warning given of him to the *wives,* as well as to the daughters of his fellow-citizens? Yet did not Cæsar repudiate his wife for being only in company with Clodius, or rather because Clodius, though by surprise upon her, was found in hers? And what was the reason he gave for it?—It was this (though a rake himself, as I have said) and only this—*the wife of Cæsar must not be suspected!*—

Cæsar was not a prouder man than Lovelace.

Go to then, Jack; nor say, nor let any body say, in thy hearing, that Lovelace, a man valuing himself upon his ancestry, is singular in his expectations of a wife's purity, though not pure himself.

As to my Clarissa, I own, that I hardly think there ever was such an angel of a woman. But has she not, as above, already taken steps, which she herself condemns? Steps, which the world and her own family did not think her *capable* of taking? And for which her own family will not forgive her?

Nor think it strange, that I refuse to hear any thing pleaded in behalf of a standard virtue from high *provocations.* 'Are not provocations and temptations the tests of virtue? A standard virtue must not be allowed to be *provoked* to destroy or annihilate itself.

'May not then the success of him, who could carry her *thus far,* be allowed to be an encouragement for him to try to carry her *further?*' 'Tis but to try. Who will be afraid of a trial for this divine creature? 'Thou knowest, that I have more than once, twice, or thrice, put to the fiery trial young women of name and character; and never

yet met with one who held out a month; nor indeed so long as could puzzle my invention. I have concluded against the whole sex upon it.' And now, if I have not found a virtue that cannot be corrupted, I will swear that there is not one such in the whole sex. Is not then the whole sex concerned that this trial should be made? And who is it that knows this lady, that would not stake upon her head the honour of the whole?—Let her who would refuse it, come forth, and desire to stand in her place.

I must assure thee, that I have a prodigious high opinion of virtue; as I have of all those graces and excellencies which I have not been able to attain myself. Every freeliver would not *say* this, nor *think* thus—every argument he uses, condemnatory of his own actions, as some would think. But ingenuousness was ever a signal part of my character.

Satan, whom thou mayest, if thou wilt, in this case, call my instigator, put the good man of old upon the severest trials. 'To his behaviour under these trials that good man owed his honour and his future rewards.' An innocent person, if doubted, must wish to be brought to a fair and candid trial.

Rinaldo indeed, in Ariosto, put the Mantuan Knight's cup of trial from him, which was to be the proof of his wife's chastity *—this was his argument for forbearing the experiment: 'Why should I seek a thing I should be loth to find? My wife is a woman. The sex is frail. I cannot believe better of her than I do. It will be to my own loss, if I find reason to think worse.' But Rinaldo would not have refused the trial of the lady, before she

* The story tells us, that whoever drank of this cup, if his wife were chaste, could drink without spilling; if otherwise, the contrary.

became his wife, and when he might have found his account in detecting her.

For my part, I would not have put the cup from me, though married, had it been but in hope of finding reason to confirm my *good* opinion of my wife's honour; and that I might know whether I had a snake or a dove in my bosom.

To my point—'What must that virtue be, which will not stand a trial?—What that woman, who would wish to shun it?'

Well then, a trial seems necessary for the *further* establishment of the honour of so excellent a creature.

And who shall put her to this trial? who, but the man who has, as she thinks, already induced her in *lesser* points to swerve?—And this for her *own sake* in a double sense—not only, as he has been able to make *some* impression, but as she *regrets* the impression made; and so may be presumed to be guarded against his further attempts.

The situation she is at present in, it must be confessed, is a disadvantageous one to her: but, if she overcome, that will redound to her honour.

Shun not, therefore, my dear soul, further trials, nor hate me for making them.—'For what woman can be said to be virtuous till she has been tried?

'Nor is *one* effort, *one* trial to be sufficient. Why? because a woman's heart may be at one time *adamant*, at another *wax*'—as I have often experienced; and so, no doubt, hast thou.

A fine time of it, methinks, thou sayest, would the women have, if they were all to be tried!—

But, Jack, I am not for that neither. Though I am a rake, I am not a rake's friend; except thine and company's.

And be this one of the morals of my tedious discussion—'Let the little rogues who would not be

put to the question, as I may call it, choose accordingly. Let them prefer to their favour good honest sober fellows, who have not been used to play dog's tricks: who will be willing to take them as they *offer;* and, who being tolerable themselves, are not suspicious of others.'

But what, methinks thou askest, is to become of the lady if she fail?

What?—why will she not, '*if once subdued,* be *always subdued?*' Another of our libertine maxims. And what an immense pleasure to a marriage-hater, what rapture to thought, to be able to prevail upon such a woman as Miss Clarissa Harlowe to live with him without *real* change of name!

But if she resist—if nobly she stand her trial?—

Why then I will marry her; and bless my stars for such an angel of a wife.

But will she not hate thee?—will she not refuse?—

No, no, Jack!—Circumstanced and situated as we are, I am not afraid of that. And hate me! why should she hate the man who loves her upon proof?

And then for a little hint at *reprisal*—am I not justified in my resolutions of trying *her* virtue; who is resolved, as I may say, to try *mine?* who has declared, that she will not marry me, till she has hopes of my reformation?

And now, to put an end to this sober argumentation, wilt thou not thyself (whom I have supposed an advocate for the lady, because I know that Lord M. has put thee upon using the interest he thinks thou hast in me, to persuade me to enter the pale; *wilt thou not thyself*) allow me to try if I cannot awaken the *woman* in her?—to try if she, with all that glowing symmetry of parts, and that full bloom of vernal graces, by which she attracts

every eye, be really inflexible as to the grand article?

Let me begin then, as opportunity presents—I will: and watch her every step to find one sliding one; her every moment to find the moment critical. And the rather, as she spares not me, but takes every advantage that offers to puzzle and plague me; nor expects nor thinks me to be a good man.

If she be a *woman*, and *love* me, I shall surely catch her once tripping: for love was ever a traitor to its harbourer: and love *within*, and I *without*, she will be *more* than woman, as the poet says, or I *less* than man, if I succeed not.

Now, Belford, all is out. The lady is mine; shall be *more* mine. Marriage, I see, is in my power, now *she* is so; else perhaps it had not. If I can have her *without* marriage, who can blame me for trying? if *not*, great will be her glory, and my future confidence. And well will she merit the sacrifice I shall make her of my liberty; and from all her sex honours next to divine, for giving a proof, 'that there was once a woman whose virtue no trials, no stratagems, no temptations, even from the man she hated not, could overpower.'

Now wilt thou see all my circulation: as in a glass wilt thou see it.—CABALA, however, is the word *; nor let the secret escape thee even in thy dreams.

Nobody doubts that she is to be my wife. Let her pass for such, when I give the word. 'Meantime reformation shall be my stalking-horse; some one of the women in London, if I can get her thither, my bird. And so much for this time.

* This word, whenever used by any of these gentlemen, was agreed to imply an inviolable secret.

LETTER XV.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In Answer to Letters* v. xi.]

Do not be so much concerned, my dearest friend, at the bickerings between my mother and me. We love one another dearly notwithstanding. If my mother had not me to find fault with, she must find fault with somebody else. And as to me, I am a very saucy girl; and were there not this occasion, there would be some other to show it.

You have heard me *say*, that this was always the case between us. You could not *otherwise* have known it. For when *you* were with us, you harmonized us both; and, indeed, I was always more afraid of you than of my mother. But then that awe is accompanied with love. Your reproofs, as I have always found, are so charmingly mild and instructive; so evidently calculated to improve, and not to provoke; that a generous temper must be amended by them. But here now, mind my good mamma, when you are not with us—*You* shall, *I tell you Nancy. I will* have *it so. Don't* I *know best*, I *won't be disobeyed.* How can a daughter of spirit bear such language; such looks too with the language; and not have a longing mind to disobey?

Don't advise me, my dear, to subscribe to my mother's prohibition of correspondence with you. She has no reason for it. Nor would she of her own judgment have prohibited it. That odd old ambling soul your uncle (whose visits are frequenter than ever), instigated by your malicious and selfish brother and sister, is the occasion. And they only

have borrowed my mother's lips, at the distance they are from you, for a sort of speaking trumpet for them. The prohibition, once more I say, cannot come from her heart: but if it did, is so much danger to be apprehended from my continuing to write to one of my own sex, as if I wrote to one of the other? Don't let dejection and disappointment, and the course of oppression which you have run through, weaken your mind, my dearest creature; and make you see inconveniencies, where there cannot possibly be any. If *your* talent is *scribbling*, as you call it; so is *mine*—and I will scribble on, at all opportunities; and to you; let 'em say what they will. Nor let your letters be filled with the self-accusations you mention: there is no cause for them. I wish, that your Anna Howe, who continues in her mother's house, were but half so good as Miss Clarissa Harlowe, who has been driven out of her father's.

I will say nothing upon your letter to your sister till I see the effect it will have. You hope, you tell me, that you shall have your money and clothes sent you, notwithstanding my opinion to the contrary—I am sorry to have it to acquaint you, that I have just now heard, that they have sat in council upon your letter; and that your mother was the only person, who was for sending you your things; and was over-ruled. I charge you therefore to accept of my offer, as by my last: and give me particular directions for what you want, that I can supply you with besides.

Don't set your thoughts so much upon a reconciliation, as to prevent your laying hold of any handsome opportunity to give yourself a protector; such a one as the man will be, who, I imagine, husband-like, will let nobody insult you but himself.

What could he mean, by letting slip such a one as that you mention? I don't know how to blame you; for how could you go beyond silence and blushes, when the foolish fellow came with his observances of the restrictions which you laid him under when in another situation? But as I told you above, you really strike people into awe. And, upon my word, you did not spare him.

I repeat what I said in my last, that you have a very nice part to act: and I will add, that you have a mind that is much too delicate for your part. But when the lover is exalted, the lady must be humbled. He is naturally proud and saucy. I doubt you must engage his *pride*, which he calls his *honour*: and that you must throw off a little more of the veil. And I would have you restrain your wishes before him, that you had not met him, and the like. What signifies wishing, my dear? He will not bear it. You can hardly expect that he will.

Nevertheless, it vexes me to the very bottom of my pride, that any wretch of that sex should be able to triumph over such a woman.

I cannot, however, but say, that I am charmed with your spirit. So much sweetness, where sweetness is requisite; so much spirit, where spirit is called for—what a *true* magnanimity!

But I doubt, in your present circumstances, you must endeavour after a little more of the reserve, in cases where you are displeased with him, and palliate a little. That humility which he puts on when you rise upon him, is not natural to him.

Methinks I see the man hesitating, and looking like the fool you paint him, under your corrective superiority!—But he is not a fool. Don't put him upon mingling resentment with his love.

Your are very serious, my dear, in the first of

the two letters before me, in relation to Mr. Hickman and me; and in relation to my mother and me. But as to the latter, you must not be too grave. If we are not well together at one time, we are not ill together at another. And while I am able to make her smile in the midst of the most angry fit she ever fell into on the present occasion (though sometimes she would not if she could help it), it is a very good sign: a sign that displeasure can never go deep, or be lasting. And then a kind word, or kind look, to her favourite Hickman, sets the one into raptures, and the other in tolerable humour, at any time.

But your case pains me at heart; and with all my levity, *both* the good folks must sometimes partake of that pain; nor will it be over, as long as you are in a state of uncertainty; and especially as I was not able to prevail for that protection for you which would have prevented the unhappy step, the necessity for which we both, with so much reason, deplore.

I have only to add (and yet it is needless to tell you) that I am, and ever will be,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XVI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

You tell me, my dear, that my clothes and the little sum of money I left behind me, will not be sent me.—But I will still hope. It is yet early days. When their passions subside, they will better consider of the matter; and especially as I have my ever dear and excellent mother for my friend

in this request. O the sweet indulgence! How has my heart bled, and how does it still bleed for her!

You advise me not to depend upon a reconciliation. I do not, I cannot depend upon it. But nevertheless it is the wish next my heart. And as to this man, what can I do? You see, *that marriage is not absolutely in my own power*, if I were *inclined* to prefer it to the trial which I think I ought to have principally in view to make for a reconciliation.

You say, he is proud and insolent—indeed he is. But can it be your opinion, that he intends to humble me down to the level of his mean pride?

And what mean you, my dear friend, when you say, that I must throw off a *little more of the veil?*—Indeed I never knew that I wore one. Let me assure you, that if I see any thing in Mr. Lovelace that looks like a design to humble me, his insolence shall never make me discover a weakness unworthy of a person distinguished by your friendship; that is to say, unworthy either of my *sex*, or of my *former self*.

But I hope, as I am out of all other protection, that he is not capable of mean or low resentments. If he has had any extraordinary trouble on my account, may he not thank himself for it? He may; and lay it, if he pleases, to his *character*; which, as I have told him, gave at least a *pretence* to my brother against him. And then, did I ever make him any promises? Did I ever profess a love for him? Did I ever wish for the continuance of his address? Had not my brother's violence precipitated matters, would not my indifference to him in all likelihood (as I designed it should) have tired out his proud spirit * and made him set out

* See Vol. I. p. 26.

for London, where he used chiefly to reside? And if he *had*, would there not have been an end of all his pretensions and hopes? For no encouragement had I given him: nor did I then correspond with him. Nor, believe me, should I have begun to do so—the fatal rencounter not having then happened; which drew me in afterwards for others' sakes (fool that I was!) and not for my own. And can you think, or can *he*, that even this but temporarily-intended correspondence (which, by the way, my mother * connived at) would have ended thus, had I not been driven on one hand, and teased on the other to continue it, the occasion which had at first induced it, continuing? What pretence then has he, were I to be absolutely in his power, to avenge himself on me, for the faults of others; and through which I have suffered more than he? It cannot, cannot be, that I should have cause to ap-apprehend him to be so ungenerous, so bad, a man.

You bid me not be concerned at the bickerings between your mother and you. Can I avoid concern, when those bickerings are on my account? That they are raised (instigated shall I say?) by my uncle, and my other relations, surely must add to my concern.

But I must observe, perhaps too critically for the state my mind is in at present, that the very sentences you give from your mother, as so many *imperatives*, which you take amiss, are very severe reflections upon yourself. For instance—*you* shall, *I tell you, Nancy*, implies that you had disputed her will—and so of the rest.

And further let me observe, with respect to what you say, that there cannot be the same rea-

* See Vol. p. II. 29.

son for a prohibition of correspondence with me, as there was of mine with Mr. Lovelace; that I thought as little of bad consequences from my correspondence with him at the time, as you can do from yours with me, now. But, if *obedience be a duty*, the *breach* of it is a *fault*, however circumstances may differ. Surely there is no merit in setting up our own judgment against the judgment of our parents. And if it be punishable so to do, I have been severely punished; and that is what I warned you of from my own dear experience.

Yet, God forgive me! I advise thus against myself with very great reluctance: and, to say truth, have not strength of mind, at present, to decline it myself. But, if the occasion go not off, I will take it into further consideration.

You give me very good advice in relation to this man; and I thank you for it. When you bid me be more upon the *reserve* with him in expressing my displeasure, perhaps I may try for it; but to *palliate*, as you call it, that, my dearest Miss Howe, cannot be done, by

Your own

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

You may believe, my dear Miss Howe, that the circumstances of the noise and outcry within the garden door, on Monday last, gave me no small uneasiness, to think that I was in the hands of a man, who could, by such vile premeditation, lay a snare to trick me out of myself, as I have so frequently called it.

Whenever he came in my sight, the thought of this gave me an indignation that made his presence disgustful to me; and the more, as I fancied I beheld in his face a triumph which reproached my weakness on that account; although perhaps it was only the same vivacity and placidness that generally sit upon his features.

I was resolved to task him upon this subject, the first time I could have patience to enter upon it with him. For, besides that it piqued me excessively from the nature of the artifice, I expected shuffling and evasion, if he were guilty, that would have incensed me: and, if not confessedly guilty, such unsatisfactory declarations, as still would have kept my mind doubtful and uneasy; and would, upon every new offence that he might give me, sharpen my disgust to him.

I have had the opportunity I waited for; and will lay before you the result.

He was making his court to my good opinion in very polite terms, and with great seriousness lamenting that he had lost it; declaring, that he knew not how he had deserved to do so; attributing to me an indifference to him, that seemed, to his infinite concern, hourly to increase. And he besought me to let him know my whole mind, that he might have an opportunity either to confess his faults and amend them, or clear his conduct to my satisfaction, and thereby entitle herself to a greater share of my confidence.

I answered him with quickness—Then, Mr. Lovelace, I will tell you one thing with a frankness, that is, perhaps more suitable to *my* character than to *yours* [*he hoped not, he said*], which gives me a very bad opinion of you, as a designing artful man.

I am all attention, madam.

I never can think tolerably of you, while the

noise and voice I heard at the garden door, which put me into the terror you took so much advantage of, remains unaccounted for. Tell me fairly, tell me candidly, the whole of that circumstance; and of your dealings with that wicked Joseph Leman; and according to your explicitness in this particular, I shall form a judgment of your future professions.

I will, without reserve, my dearest life, said he, tell you the whole; and hope that my sincerity in the relation will atone for any thing you may think wrong in the fact.

'I knew nothing, *said he,* of this man, this Leman, and should have scorned a resort to so low a method as bribing the servant of any family to let me into the secrets of that family, if I had not detected him in attempting to corrupt a servant of mine, to inform him of all my motions, of all my supposed intrigues, and, in short, of every action of my private life, as well as of my circumstances and engagements; and this for motives too obvious to be dwelt upon.

'My servant told me of his offers, and I ordered him, unknown to the fellow, to let me hear a conversation that was to pass between them.

'In the midst of it, and just as he had made an offer of money for a particular piece of intelligence, promising more when procured, I broke in upon them, and by bluster, calling for a knife to cut off his ears (one of which I took hold of), in order to make a present of it, as I said, to his employers, I obliged him to tell me who they were.

'Your brother, madam, and your uncle Antony, he named.

'It was not difficult when I had given him my pardon on naming them (after I had set before him the enormity of the task he had undertaken, and

the honourableness of my intentions to your dear self) to prevail upon him, by a larger reward, to serve me; since at the same time, he might preserve the favour of your uncle and brother, as I desired to know nothing but what related to myself, and to you, in order to guard us both against the effects of an ill-will, which all his fellow servants, as well as himself, as he acknowledged, thought undeserved.

'By this means, I own to you, madam, I frequently turned his principals about upon a pivot of my own, unknown to themselves: and the fellow, who is always calling himself a *plain man*, and boasting of his *conscience*, was the easier, as I condescended frequently to assure him of my honourable views; and as he knew that the use I made of his intelligence, in all likelihood, prevented fatal mischiefs.

'I was the more pleased with his services, as (let me acknowledge to you, madam) they procured to you, unknown to yourself, a safe and uninterrupted egress (which perhaps would not otherwise have been continued to you so long as it was) to the garden and wood-house! For he undertook to them, to watch all your motions; and the more cheerfully (for the fellow loves you) as it kept off the curiosity of others*.'

So, my dear, it comes out, that I *myself* was obliged to this deep contriver.

I sat in silent astonishment; and thus he went on.

'As to the circumstance, for which you think so hardly of me, I do freely confess, that having a suspicion that you would revoke your intention of getting away, and in that case apprehending that

* See Vol. II. p. 254, 255.

we should not have the time together that was necessary for that purpose; I had ordered him to keep off every body he *could* keep off, and to be himself within view of the garden door; for I was determined, if possible, to induce you to adhere to your resolution.'—

But pray, sir, interrupting him, how came you to apprehend that I should revoke my intention? I had indeed deposited a letter to that purpose; but you had it not: and how, as I had reserved to myself the privilege of a revocation, did you know, but I might have prevailed upon my friends, and so have revoked upon good grounds?

'I will be very ingenuous, madam—you had made me hope that if you changed your mind, you would give me a meeting to apprize me of the reasons for it. I went to the loose bricks, and I saw the letter there: and as I knew your friends were immoveably fixed in their schemes, I doubted not but the letter was to revoke or suspend your resolution; and probably to serve instead of a meeting too. I therefore let it lie, that if you *did* revoke, you might be under the necessity of meeting me for the sake of the expectation you had given me: and as I came prepared, I was resolved, pardon me, madam, whatever were your intentions, that you should not go back. Had I taken your letter I must have been determined by the contents of it, for the present, at least: but not having received it, and you having reason to think I wanted not resolution in a situation so desperate, to make your friends a personal visit, I depended upon the interview you had bid me hope for.'

Wicked wretch, said I; it is my grief, that I gave you opportunity to take so exact a measure of my weakness!—But *would* you have presumed to visit the family, had I not met you?

Indeed I would. I had some friends in readiness, who were to have accompanied me to them. And had your father refused to give me audience, I would have taken my friends with me to Solmes.

And what did you intend to do to Mr. Solmes?

Not the least hurt, had the man been passive.

But had he *not* been passive as you call it, what would you have done to Mr. Solmes?

He was loth, he said, to tell me—yet not the least hurt to his *person*.

I repeated my question.

If he *must* tell me, he only proposed to carry off the *poor fellow*, and to hide him for a month or two. And this he would have done, let what would have been the consequence.

Was ever such a wretch heard of!—I sighed from the bottom of my heart; but bid him proceed from the part I had interrupted him at.

'I ordered the fellow, as I told you, madam, said he, to keep within view of the garden door: and if he found any parly between us, and any body coming (before you could retreat undiscovered), whose coming might be attended with violent effects, he should cry out; and this not only in order to save himself from their suspicions of him, but to give me warning to make off, and, if possible, to induce you (I own it, madam) to go off with me, according to your own appointment. And I hope all circumstances considered, and the danger I was in of losing you for ever, that the acknowledgment of this contrivance, or if you had *not* met me, *that* upon Solmes, will not procure me your hatred; for, had they come as *I* expected as well as *you*, what a despicable wretch had I been, could I have left you to the insults of a brother and others of your family, whose mercy was cruelty when they had *not* the pretence with

which this detected interview would have furnished them!'

What a wretch! said I.—But if, sir, taking your own account of this strange matter to be fact, any body were coming, how happened it, that I saw only that man Leman (I *thought* it was he) out of the door, and at a distance, look after us?

Very lucky! said he, putting his hand first in one pocket, then in another—I hope I have not thrown it away—it is, perhaps in the coat I had on yesterday—little did I think it would be necessary to be produced—but I love to come to a demonstration whenever I can—I *may* be giddy—I *may* be heedless—I *am* indeed—but no man, as to *you*, madam, ever had a sincerer heart.

He then stepping to the parlour door, called his servant to bring him the coat he had on yesterday.

The servant did. And from the pocket, rumpled up as a paper he regarded not, pulled out a letter, written by that Joseph, dated Monday night; in which 'he begs pardon for crying out so soon—says, that his fears of being discovered to act on both sides, had made him take the rushing of a little dog (that always follows him) through the phyllirea-hedge, for Betty's being at hand, or some of his masters: and that when he found his mistake, he opened the door by his own key (which the contriving wretch confessed he had furnished him with), and inconsiderately ran out in a hurry, to have apprized him that his crying out was owing to his fright only:' and he added, 'that they were upon the hunt for me, by the time he returned *.'

I shook my head—Deep! deep! deep! said I,

* See his letter to Joseph Leman, Vol. II. No. L. towards the end, where he tells him, he would contrive for him a letter of this nature to copy.

at the best!—O Mr. Lovelace! God forgive and reform you!—But you are, I see plainly, (upon the whole of your own account) a very artful, a very designing man.

Love, my dearest life, is ingenious. Night and day have I racked my stupid brain [*O sir, thought I, not stupid! 'twere well perhaps if it were*] to contrive methods to prevent the sacrifice designed to be made of you, and the mischief that must have ensued upon it: so little hold in your affections: such undeserved antipathy from your friends: so much danger of losing you for ever from *both* causes. I have not had for the whole fortnight before last Monday, half an hour's rest at a time. And I own to you, madam, that I should never have forgiven myself, had I omitted any contrivance or forethought that would have prevented your return without me.

Again I blamed myself for meeting him: and justly, for there were many chances to one, that I had *not* met him. And if I had not, all his fortnight's contrivances, as to me, would have come to nothing; and perhaps, I might nevertheless have escaped Solmes.

Yet had he resolved to come to Harlowe Place with his friends, and been insulted, as he certainly would have been, what mischiefs might have followed!

But his resolution to run away with and to hide the poor Solmes for a month or so, O my dear, what a wretch have I let run away with *me*, instead of *Solmes*!

I asked him, if he thought such enormities as these, such defiances of the laws of society, would have passed unpunished?

He had the assurance to say, with one of his usual gay airs, that he should by this means have

disappointed his enemies, and saved me from a forced marriage. He had no pleasure in such desperate pushes. Solmes he would not have *personally* hurt. He must have fled his country, for a time at least: and, truly, if he had been obliged to do so (as all his hopes of my favour must have been at an end), he would have had a fellow-traveller of his own sex out of our family, whom I little thought of.

Was ever such a wretch!—To be sure he meant my brother!

And such, sir, said I, in high resentment, are the uses you make of your corrupt intelligencer—

My corrupt intelligencer, madam! interrupted he, he is to this hour your brother's as well as mine. By what I have ingenuously told you, you may see who began this corruption. Let me assure you, madam, that there are many free things which I have been guilty of as *reprisals,* in which I would not have been the *agressor.*

All that I shall further say on this head, Mr. Lovelace, is this: that as this vile double-faced wretch has probably been the cause of great mischief on both sides, and *still* continues, as you own, his wicked practices, I think it would be but just, to have my friends apprized what a creature *he* is whom some of them encourage.

What you please, madam, as to that—my service, as well as your brother's, is now almost over for him. The fellow has made a good hand of it. He does not intend to stay long in his place. He is now actually in treaty for an inn, which will do his business for life. I can tell you further, that he makes love to your sister's Betty: and that *by my advice.* They will be married when he is established. An innkeeper's wife is every man's mistress; and I have a scheme in my head to set

some engines at work to make *her* repent her saucy behaviour to you to the last day of her life.

What a wicked schemer are you, sir!—Who shall avenge upon you the still greater evils which you have been guilty of?—I forgive Betty with all my heart. She was not my servant; and but too probably, in what she did, obeyed the commands of her to whom she owed duty, better than I obeyed those to whom I owed more.

No matter for that, the wretch said [*to be sure, my dear, he must design to make me afraid of him*]: the decree was gone out—Betty must smart—smart too by an act of her own choice. He loved, he said, to make bad people their own punishers.—Nay, madam, excuse me; but if the fellow, if this Joseph, in *your* opinion, deserves punishment, mine is a complicated scheme; a man and his wife cannot well suffer separately, and it may come home to *him* too.

I had no patience with him. I told him so. I see, sir, said I, I see, what a man I am with. Your *rattle* warns me of the *snake*.—And away I flung: leaving him seemingly vexed, and in confusion.

LETTER XVIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

My plain-dealing with Mr. Lovelace, on seeing him again, and the free dislike I expressed to his ways, his manners, and his contrivances, as well as to his speeches, have obliged him to recollect himself a little. He will have it, that the menaces which he threw out just now against my brother and Mr. Solmes, are only the effect of an unmeaning pleasantry: that he has too great a stake in his coun-

try to be guilty of *such* enterprises as should lay him under a necessity of quitting it for ever. Twenty things, particularly, he says, he has suffered Joseph Leman to tell of him, that *were not*, and *could not* be true, in order to make himself formidable in some people's eyes, and this purely with a view to *prevent mischief*. He is unhappy, as far as he knows, in a quick invention; in hitting readily upon expedients; and many things are reported of him which he never said, and many which he never did, and others which he has only talked of (as just now), and which he has forgot as soon as the words have passed his lips.

This may be so, in part, my dear. No one man so young could be so wicked as he has been reported to be. But such a man at the head of such wretches as he is said to have at his beck, all men of fortune and fearlessness, and capable of such enterprises as I have unhappily found him capable of, what is not to be apprehended from him!

His carelessness about his character is one of his excuses: a very bad one. What hope can a woman have of a man who values not his reputation?—These gay wretches may, in mixed conversation, divert for an hour, or so: but the man of probity, the man of virtue, is the man that is to be the partner for life. What woman, who could help it, would submit it to the courtesy of a wretch, who avows a disregard to all moral sanctions, whether he will perform his part of the matrimonial obligation, and treat her with tolerable politeness?

With these notions, and with these reflections, to be thrown upon such a man myself!—Would to heaven—but what avail wishes now?—To whom can I fly, if I would fly from him?

LETTER XIX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, April 14.

NEVER did I hear of such a parcel of foolish toads as these Harlowes!—Why, Belford, the lady must fall, if every hair of her head were a guardian angel, unless they were to make a visible appearance for her, or, snatching her from me at unawares, would draw her after them into the starry regions.

All I had to apprehend, was, that a daughter, so reluctantly carried off, would offer terms to her father, and would be accepted upon a mutual *concedence; they* to give up *Solmes; she* to give up *me.* And so I was contriving to do all I could to guard against the latter. But they seem resolved to perfect the work they have begun.

What stupid creatures are there in the world! This foolish brother not to know, that he who would be bribed to undertake a base thing by one, would be *over*-bribed to *retort* the baseness; especially when he could be put into the way to serve himself by both!—Thou, Jack, wilt never know one half of my contrivances.

He here relates the conversation between him and the lady (upon the subject of the noise and exclamations his agent made at the garden door) to the same effect as in the lady's letter, No. xvii. *and proceeds exulting:*

What a capacity for glorious mischief has thy friend!—yet how near the truth all of it! The only deviation, my asserting that the fellow made

the noises by *mistake*, and through *fright*, and not by *previous direction:* had she known the precise truth, her anger, to be so taken in, would never have let her forgive me.

Had I been a military hero, I should have made gunpowder useless: for I should have blown up all my adversaries by dint of stratagem, turning their own devices upon them.

But these fathers and mothers—Lord help 'em!—Were not the powers of nature stronger than those of discretion, and were not that busy *dea bona* to afford her genial aids, till tardy prudence qualified parents to *manage* their future offspring, how few people would have children!

James and Arabella may have *their* motives; but what can be said for a father acting as *this* father has acted? What for a mother? What for an aunt? What for uncles?—Who can have patience with such fellows and fellow-esses?

Soon will the fair-one hear how high their foolish resentments run against her: and then will she, it is to be hoped, have a little more confidence in me. Then will I be jealous that she loves me not with the preference my heart builds upon: then will I bring her to confessions of grateful love: and then will I kiss her when I please; and not stand trembling, as now, like a hungry hound, who sees a delicious morsel within his reach, yet dares not leap at it for his life.

But I was *originally* a bashful mortal. Indeed I am bashful still with regard to this lady—bashful, yet know the sex so well!—But that indeed is the *reason* that I know it so well:—for Jack, I have had abundant cause, when I have looked into *myself*, by way of comparison with the *other* sex, to conclude that a bashful man has a good deal of the soul of a woman; and, so, like Tiresias, can tell what

they think, and what they drive at, as well as themselves.

The modest ones and I, particularly, are pretty much upon a par. The difference between us is only, what they *think*, I *act*. But the immodest ones outdo the worst of us by a bar's length, both in thinking and acting.

One argument let me plead in proof of my assertion; that even we rakes love modesty in a woman; while the modest women as they are accounted (that is to say, the *slyest*) love, and generally prefer, an impudent man. Whence can this be, but from a likeness in nature? And this made the poet say, that every woman is a rake in her heart. It concerns them, by their *actions*, to prove the contrary, if they can.

Thus have I read in some of the philosophers, *that no wickedness is comparable to the wickedness of a woman* *. Canst thou tell me, Jack, who says this? Was it Socrates? For he had the devil of a wife—or who? Or is it Solomon?—*King* Solomon—thou rememberest to have read of such a king, dost thou not? SOL-O-MON, I learned in my infant state [my mother was a good woman] to answer, when asked, *who was the wisest man?*—But my indulgent questioner never asked me, how he came by the inspired part of his wisdom.

Come, come, Jack, you and I are not so very bad, could we but stop where we are.

He then gives the particulars of what passed between him and the lady on his menaces relating to her brother and Mr. Solmes, and of his design to punish Betty Barnes and Joseph Leman.

* Mr. Lovelace is as much out in his conjecture of Solomon as of Socrates. The passage is in Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxv.

LETTER XX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Friday April 14.

I will now give you the particulars of a conversation that has just passed between Mr. Lovelace and me; which I must call agreeable.

It began with his telling me, that he had just received intelligence that my friends were on a sudden come to a resolution to lay aside all thoughts of pursuing me, or of getting me back: and that therefore he attended me to know my pleasure; and what I would do, or have *him* do?

I told him, that I would have him leave me directly; and that, when it was known to every body that I was absolutely independent of him, it would pass, that I had left my father's house because of my brother's ill usage of me: which was a plea that I might make with justice, and to the excuse of my father as well as of myself.

He mildly replied, that if we could be certain, that my relations would *adhere* to this their new resolution, he could have no objection, since such was my pleasure: but, as he was well assured, that they had taken it only from apprehensions, that a more *active* one might involve my brother (who had breathed nothing but revenge) in some fatal misfortune, there was too much reason to believe, that they would resume their former purpose the moment they should think they *safely* might.

This, madam, said he, is a risk I cannot run. You would think it strange if I could. And yet, as soon as I knew they had so given out, I thought it proper to apprize you of it, and to take your commands upon it.

Let me hear, said I, willing to try if he had any particular view, what *you* think most advisable?

'Tis very easy to say that, if I durst—*If I might not offend you*—if it were not to *break conditions that shall be inviolable with me.*

Say then, sir, what you *would* say. I can approve or disapprove, as I think fit.

Had not the man a fine opportunity here to speak out? He had. And thus he used it.

To wave, madam, what I *would* say till I have more courage to speak out [*more courage, Mr. Lovelace more courage, my dear!*]—I will only propose what I think will be most agreeable to *you*—suppose, *if you choose not to go to Lady Betty's,* that you take a turn cross the country to Windsor?

Why to Windsor?

Because it is a pleasant place: because it lies in the way either to Berkshire, to Oxford, or to London: *Berkshire,* where Lord M. is at present: *Oxford,* in the neighbourhood of which lives Lady Betty: *London,* whither you may retire at your pleasure: or if you will *have* it so, whither I may go, you staying at Windsor: and yet be within an easy distance of you, if any thing should happen, or if your friends should change their new taken resolution.

This proposal, however, displeased me not. But I said, my only objection was, the distance of Windsor from Miss Howe, of whom I should be glad to be always within two or three hours reach by a messenger, if possible.

If I had thoughts ofany other place than Windsor or nearer to Miss Howe, he wanted but my commands, and would seek for proper accommodations: but, fix as I pleased, further or nearer, he had servants, and they had nothing else to do but to obey me.

A grateful thing then he named to me—to send for my Hannah, as soon as I should be fixed *; unless I would choose one of the young gentlewomen *here* to attend me; both of whom, as I had acknowledged, were very obliging; and he knew I had generosity enough to make it worth their while.

This of Hannah, he might see, I took very well. I said I had thoughts of sending for her, as soon as I got to more convenient lodgings. As to these young gentlewomen, it were pity to break in upon that usefulness which the whole family were of to each other: each having her proper part, and performing it with an agreeable alacrity: insomuch that I liked them all so well, that I could even pass my days among them were he to leave me; by which means the lodgings would be more convenient to me than now they were.

He need not repeat his objections to this place, he said: but as to going to Windsor, or wherever else I thought fit, or as to his personal attendance, or leaving me, he would assure me (he very agreeably said) that I could propose nothing in which I thought my reputation, and even my *punctilio*, concerned, that he would not cheerfully come into. And since I was so much taken up with my pen, he would instantly order his horse to be got ready, and would set out.

Not to be off my caution. Have you any acquaintance at Windsor? said I.—Know you of any convenient lodgings there?

Except the Forest, replied he, where I have often hunted, I know the least of Windsor, of any place so noted and so pleasant. Indeed, I have not a single acquaintance there.

* See his reasons for proposing Windsor, p. 130, 131—and her Hannah, p. 134, 135.

Upon the whole, I told him, that I thought his proposal of Windsor not amiss; and that I would remove thither, if I could get a lodging only for myself, and an upper chamber for Hannah: for that my stock of money was but small, as was easy to be conceived; and I should be very loth to be obliged to any body. I added, that the sooner I removed the better; for that then he could have no objection to go to London, or Berkshire, as he pleased. And I should let every body know my independence.

He again proposed himself, in very polite terms, for my banker. But I, as civilly, declined his offer.

This conversation was to be, all of it, in the main, agreeable. He asked whether I would choose to lodge in the town of Windsor, or out of it?

As near the castle, I said, as possible, for the convenience of going constantly to the public worship; an opportunity I had been long deprived of.

He should be very glad, he told me, if he could procure me accommodations in any one of the canons' houses; which he imagined would be more agreeable to me than any other, on many accounts. And as he could depend upon my promise, never to have any other man but himself, on the condition to which he had so cheerfully subscribed, he should be easy; since it was now his part, *in earnest*, to set about recommending himself to my favour, by the *only* way he knew it could be done. Adding, with a very serious air—I am but a young man, madam; but I have run a long course: let not your purity of mind incline you to despise me for the acknowledgment. It is high time to be weary of it, and to reform; since, like Solomon, I can say, there is nothing new

under the sun: but that it is my belief, that a life of virtue can afford such pleasures, on reflection, as will be for ever blooming, for ever new!

I was agreeably surprised. I looked at him, I believe, as if I doubted my ears and my eyes. His aspect however became his words.

I expressed my satisfaction in terms so agreeable to him, that he said, he found a delight in this early dawning of a better day to him, and in *my* approbation, which he had never received from the success of the most favoured of his pursuits.

Surely, my dear, the man *must* be in earnest. He could not have *said* this; he could not have *thought* it, had he not. What followed made me still readier to believe him.

In the midst of my wild vagaries, said he, I have ever preserved a reverence for religion, and for religious men. I always called another cause, when any of my libertine companions, in pursuance of Lord Shaftesbury's test, (which is a part of the rake's creed, and what I may call *the whetstone of infidelity*) endeavoured to turn the sacred subject into ridicule. On this very account I have been called by good men of the clergy, who nevertheless would have it that I was a *practical* rake, *the decent rake*: and indeed I had too much pride in my shame, to disown the name of *rake*.

This, madam, I am the readier to confess, as it may give you hope, that the generous task of my reformation, which I flatter myself you will have the goodness to undertake, will not be so difficult a one as you may have imagined; for it has afforded me some pleasure in my retired hours, when a temporary remorse has struck me for any thing I have done amiss, that I should one day take delight in another course of life: for, unless we *can*, I dare

say, no durable *good* is to be expected from the endeavour. Your example, madam, must do all, must confirm all *.

The divine grace, or favour, Mr. Lovelace, must do all, and confirm all. You know not how much you please me, that I can talk to you in this dialect.

And I then thought of his generosity to his pretty rustic; and of his kindness to his tenants.

Yet, madam, be pleased to remember one thing: reformation cannot be a *sudden* work. I have infinite vivacity: it is that which runs away with me. Judge, dearest madam, by what I am going to confess, that I have a prodigious way to journey on, before a good person will think me tolerable; since though I have read in some of our *perfectionists* enough to make a better man than myself either run into madness or despair about the grace you mention; yet I cannot enter into the meaning of the word, nor into the modus of its operation. Let me not then be checked, when I mention your example for my *visible* reliance; and instead of using such words, till I can better understand them, suppose all the rest included in the profession of that reliance.

I told him, that, although I was somewhat concerned at his expression, and surprised at so much *darkness*, as (for want of another word) I would call it, in a man of his talents and learning; yet I was pleased with his ingenuousness. I wished him to encourage this way of thinking. I told him, that his observation, that no *durable* good was to be expected from any new course where there was not a delight taken in it, was just: but that the delight would follow by use.

* That he proposes one day to reform, and that he has sometimes good motions, see Vol. I. p. 253.

And twenty things of this sort I even preached to him; taking care, however, not to be tedious, nor to let my expanded heart give him a contracted or impatient brow. And, indeed, he took visible pleasure in what I said, and even hung upon the subject, when I, to try him, once or twice, seemed ready to drop it: and proceeded to give me a most agreeable instance, that he could at times think both deeply and seriously.—Thus it was.

He was once, he said, dangerously wounded in a duel, in the left arm, baring it, to show me the scar: that this (notwithstanding a great effusion of blood, it being upon an artery) was followed by a violent fever, which at last fixed upon his spirits; and *that* so obstinately, that neither did *he* desire life, nor his *friends* expect it: that, for a month together, his heart, as he thought, was so totally changed, that he despised his former courses, and particularly that rashness, which had brought him to the state he was in, and his antagonist (who, however, was the agressor) into a much worse: that in this space he had thoughts which at times still give him pleasure to reflect upon: and although these promising prospects changed, as he recovered health and spirits, yet he parted with them with so much reluctance, that he could not help showing it in a copy of verses, *truly blank* ones, he said; some of which he repeated (and advantaged by the grace which he gives to every thing he repeats): I thought them very tolerable ones; the sentiments, however, much graver than I expected from him.

He has promised me a copy of the lines; and then I shall judge better of their merit; and so shall you. The tendency of them was, 'That, since sickness only gave him a proper train of thinking, and that his restored health brought with

it a return of his evil habits, he was ready to renounce the gifts of nature for those of contemplation.'

He further declared, that although these good motions went off (as he had owned) on his recovery, yet he had better hopes now, from the influence of my example, and from the reward before him, if he persevered: and that he was the more hopeful that he should, as his present resolution was made in a full tide of health and spirits; and when he had nothing to wish for but perseverence, to entitle himself to my favour.

I will not throw cold water, Mr. Lovelace, said I, on a rising flame: but look to it! for I shall endeavour to keep you up to this spirit. I shall measure your value of me by this test: and I would have you bear those charming lines of Mr. Rowe for ever in your mind; you, who have, by your own confession, so much to repent of; and indeed, as the scar, you showed me, will, in one instance, remind you to your dying day.

The lines, my dear, are from that poet's Ulysses; you have heard me often admire them; and I repeated them to him:

> Habitual evils change not on a sudden:
> But many days must pass, and many sorrows;
> Conscious remorse and anguish must be felt,
> To curb desire, to break the stubborn will,
> And work a second nature in the soul,
> Ere virtue can resume the place she lost:
> 'Tis else DISSIMULATION—

He had often read these lines, he said; but never *tasted* them before.—By his *soul* (the unmortified creature swore), and as *he hoped to be saved*, he was *now* in earnest in his good resolutions. He had said, *before* I repeated those lines from Rowe, that habitual evils could not be changed on a *sudden*:

but he hoped, he should not be thought a *dissembler*, if he were not enabled to *hold* his good purposes; since ingratitude and dissimulation were vices that of all others he abhorred.

May you ever abhor them, said I. They are the most odious of all vices.

I hope, my dear Miss Howe, I shall not have occasion, in my future letters, to contradict these promising appearances. Should I have *nothing* on his side to combat with, I shall be very far from being happy, from the sense of my fault, and the indignation of all my relations.—So shall not fail of condign punishment for it, from my inward remorse on account of my forfeited character. But the least ray of hope could not dart in upon me, without my being willing to lay hold of the very first opportunity to communicate it to *you*, who take so generous a share in all my concerns.

Nevertheless, you may depend upon it, my dear, that these agreeable assurances, and hopes of his begun reformation, shall not make me forget my caution. Not that I think, at worst, any more than you, that he dare to harbour a thought injurious to my honour: but he is very various, and there is an *apparent*, and even an *acknowledged* unfixedness in his temper, which at times gives me uneasiness. I am resolved therefore to keep him at distance from my person and my thoughts as much as I can: for whether *all* men are or are not encroachers, I am sure Mr. Lovelace is one.

Hence it is that I have always cast about, and will continue to cast about, what ends he may have in view from *this* proposal, or from *that* report. In a word, though hopeful of the *best*, I will always be fearful of the *worst*, in every thing that admits of doubt. For it is better, in such a situation as

mine, to apprehend without cause, than to subject myself to surprise for want of forethought.

Mr. Lovelace is gone to Windsor, having left two servants to attend me. He purposes to be back to-morrow.

I have written to my aunt Hervey, to supplicate her interest in my behalf, for my clothes, books, and money; signifying to her, 'That, if I may be restored to the favour of my family, and allowed a negative only, as to any man who may be proposed to me, and be used like a daughter, a niece, and a sister, I will stand by my offer to live single, and submit, as I ought, to a negative from my father.' Intimating, nevertheless, 'That it were perhaps better, after the usage I have received from my brother and sister, that I may be allowed to be distant from them, as well for their sakes as for my own' (meaning, as I suppose it will be taken, at my dairy-house)—offering 'to take my father's directions as to the manner I shall live in, the servants I shall have, and in every thing that shall show the dutiful subordination to which I am willing to conform.'

My aunt will know by my letter to my sister how to direct to me, if she be permitted to favour me with a line.

I am equally earnest *with her* in *this* letter, as I was with my *sister* in *that* I wrote to *her*, to obtain for me a speedy reconciliation, that I may not be further precipitated; intimating, 'That, by a timely lenity, all may pass for a misunderstanding only, which, otherwise, will be thought equally disgraceful to them and to me; appealing to her for the necessity I was under to do what I did.'—

Had I owned that I was overreached, and forced away against my intention, might they not, as a

proof of the truth of my assertion, have insisted upon my immediate return to them? And, if I did *not* return, would they not have reason to suppose, that I had *now* altered my mind (if such were my mind), or had not the *power* to return?—Then were I to have gone back, must it not have been upon their own terms? *No conditioning with a father!* is a maxim with my father and with my uncles. If I would have gone, Mr. Lovelace would have opposed it. So I must have been under his control, or have run away *from* him, as it is supposed I did *to* him, from Harlowe Place. In what a giddy light would this have made me appear!—Had he constrained me, could I have appealed to my friends for *their* protection, without risking the very consequences, to prevent which (setting up myself presumptuously, as a middle person between flaming spirits) I have run into such terrible inconveniences.

But, after all, must it not give me great anguish of mind, to be forced to sanctify, as I may say, by my seeming *after*-approbation, a measure I was so artfully tricked into, and which I was so much resolved not to take?

How one evil brings on another is sorrowfully witnessed to by

Your ever-obliged and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XXI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, April 14.

Thou hast often reproached me, Jack, with my vanity, without distinguishing the humorous turn that accompanies it; and for which at the same time, that thou robbest me of the merit of it thou admirest me highly. *Envy* gives thee the *indistinction*: *nature* inspires the *admiration*: unknown to thyself it inspires it. But thou art too clumsy and too short-sighted a mortal, to know how to account even for the impulses by which thou thyself art moved.

Well, but this acquits thee not of my charge of vanity, Lovelace, methinks thou sayest.

And true thou sayest: for I have indeed a confounded parcel of it. But, if men of parts may not be allowed to be vain, who should? And yet, upon second thoughts, men of parts have the least occasion of any to be vain; since the world (so few of *them* are there in it) are ready to find them out, and extol them. If a fool can be made sensible that there is a man who has more understanding than *himself*, he is ready enough to conclude, that such a man must be a very extraordinary creature.

And what, at this rate, is the general conclusion to be drawn from the premises?—Is it not, that *no* man ought to be vain?—But what if a man can't help it!—This, perhaps, may be *my* case. But there is nothing upon which I value myself so much as upon my *inventions*. And for the soul of me I cannot help letting it be seen that I *do*. Yet this vanity may be a means, perhaps, to overthrow me with this sagacious lady.

She is very apprehensive of me, I see. I have studied before her and Miss Howe, as often as I have been with them, to pass for a giddy, thoughtless creature. What a folly then to be so *expatiatingly* sincere in my answer to her home put, upon the noises within the garden?—But such success having attended that contrivance [success, Jack, has blown many a man up!] my cursed *vanity* got uppermost, and kept down my *caution.* The menace to have secreted Solmes, and that other, that I had thoughts to run away with her foolish brother, and of my project to revenge her upon the two servants, so much terrified the dear creature, that I was forced to sit down to muse after means to put myself right in her opinion.

Some favourable incidents, at the time, tumbled in from my agent in her family; at least such as I was determined to *make* favourable: and therefore I desired admittance; and this before she could resolve any thing against me; that is to say, while her admiration of my intrepidity kept resolution in suspense.

Accordingly, I prepared myself to be all gentleness, all obligingness, all serenity; and as I have now-and-then, and always *had*, more or less, good motions pop up in my mind, I encouraged and collected every thing of this sort that I had ever had from novicehood to maturity [*not long in recollecting, Jack*], in order to bring the dear creature into good humour with me *: and who knows, thought I, if I can hold it, and proceed, but I may be able to lay a foundation fit to build my grand scheme upon!—Love, thought I, is not *naturally* a doubter:

* He had said, p. 96, that he would make reformation his stalking-horse, &c.

Fear is: I will try to banish the latter: nothing then but love will remain, Credulity is the god of love's *prime minister;* and they never are asunder.

He then acquaints his friend with what passed between him and the lady, in relation to his advices from Harlowe Place, and to his proposals about lodgings, pretty much to the same purpose as in her preceding letter.

When he comes to mention his proposal of the Windsor lodgings, thus he expresses himself:

Now, Belford, can it enter into thy leaden head what I meant by this proposal?—I know it cannot. And so I'll tell thee.

To leave her for a day or two, with a view to *serve her by my absence,* would, as I thought, look like confiding in her favour. I could not think of leaving her, thou knowest, while I had reason to believe her friends would pursue us; and I began to apprehend that she would suspect that I made a pretence of that intentional pursuit to keep about her and with her. But now that they had declared against it, and that they would *not* receive her if she went back (a declaration she had better hear first from me than from Miss Howe, or any other) what should hinder me from giving her this mark of my obedience; especially as I could leave Will, who is a clever fellow, and can do any thing but write and spell, and Lord M.'s Jonas (not as guards, to be sure, but as attendants only); the latter to be dispatched to me occasionally by the former, whom I could acquaint with my motions?

Then I wanted to inform myself, why I had not congratulatory letters from Lady Sarah and Lady Betty, and from my cousins Montague, to whom I

had written, glorying in my beloved's escape; which letters, if properly worded, might be made necessary to show her as matters proceed.

As to Windsor, I had no design to carry her particularly thither: but somewhere it was proper to name, as she condescended to ask my advice about it. London I durst not; but very cautiously: and so as to make it her own option: for I must tell thee, that there is such a perverseness in the sex, that, when they ask your advice, they do it only to know your opinion, that they may oppose it: though, had not the thing in question been *your* choice, perhaps it had been *theirs*.

I could easily give reasons *against* Windsor, after I had pretended to be there; and this would have looked the better, as it was a place of my own nomination; and shown her that I had no fixed scheme. Never was there in woman such a sagacious, such an all-alive apprehension, as in this. Yet it is a grievous thing to an honest man to be suspected.

Then, in my going or return, I can call upon Mrs. Greme. She and my beloved had a great deal of talk together. If I knew what it was about; and that *either*, upon their first acquaintance, was for benefiting herself by the *other*; I might contrive to serve them *both* without hurting *myself*; for these are the most prudent ways of doing friendships, and what are not followed by regrets, though the *served* should prove ungrateful. Then Mrs. Greme corresponds by pen and ink with her farmer-sister where we are: something may possibly arise *that* way, either of a convenient nature, *which I may pursue*; or of an inconvenient, *which I may avoid*.

Always be careful of back doors, is a maxim with me in all my exploits. Whoever knows me,

knows that I am no proud man. I can talk as familiarly to servants as to principals, when I have a mind to make it worth their while to oblige me in any thing. Then servants are but as the common soldiers in an army. They do all the mischief; frequently without malice, and merely, *good souls!* for mischief-sake.

I am most apprehensive about Miss Howe. She has a confounded deal of wit, and wants only a subject, to show as much roguery: and should I be outwitted with all my sententious, boasting conceit of my own *nostrum-mongership*—[*I love to plague thee, who art a pretender to accuracy*, and a surface-skimmer *in learning, with* out-of-the-way *words and phrases*] I should certainly hang, drown, or shoot myself.

Poor Hickman! I pity him for the prospect he has with such a virago! But the fellow's a fool, God wot! And now I think of it, it is absolutely necessary for complete happiness in the married state that one *should* be a fool [an argument I once held with this very Miss Howe]. But then the fool should know the other's superiority, otherwise the obstinate one will disappoint the wise one.

But my agent Joseph has helped to secure this quarter, as I have hinted to thee more than once.

LETTER XXII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

In Continuation.

But is it not a confounded thing that I cannot fasten an obligation upon this proud beauty? I have two motives in endeavouring to prevail upon her to

accept of money and raiment from me: one; the real pleasure I should have in the accommodating of the haughty maid; and to think there was something near her and upon her, that I could call *mine;* the other, in order to abate her severity, and humble her a little.

Nothing more effectually brings down a proud spirit, than a sense of lying under pecuniary obligations. This has always made me solicitous to avoid laying myself under any such: yet sometimes, formerly, have I been put to it, and cursed the tardy revolution of the quarterly periods. And yet I ever made shift to avoid anticipations: *I never would eat the calf in the cow's belly,* as Lord M.'s phrase is: for what is that, but to hold our lands upon *tenant-courtesy,* the vilest of all tenures? To be denied a fox-chase, for fear of breaking down a fence upon my own grounds? To be clamoured at for repairs *studied* for rather than really *wanted?* To be prated to by a bumkin with his hat on, and his arms folded, as if he defied your expectations of that sort; his foot firmly fixed, as if upon his own ground, and you forced to take his arch leers and stupid gybes? he intimating by the whole of his conduct, that he had had it in his power to oblige you, and, if you behave civilly, may oblige you again?—I, who think I have a right to break every man's head I pass by, if I like not his looks, to bear this!—No more could I do it, than I could borrow of an insolent uncle, or inquisitive aunt, who would thence think themselves entitled to have an account of all my life and actions laid before them for their review and censure.

My charmer, I see, has a pride like my own: but she has no *distinction* in her pride: nor knows the pretty fool, that there is nothing nobler, nothing more delightful, than for lovers to be conferring

and receiving obligations from each other. In this very farm-yard, to give thee a familiar instance, I have more than once seen this remark illustrated. A strutting rascal of a cock have I beheld chuck, chuck, chuck, chuck-ing his mistress to him, when he has found a single barley-corn, taking it up with his bill, and letting it drop five or six times, still repeating his chucking invitation: and when two or three of his feathered ladies strive who shall be the first for't, [*O Jack, a cock is a Grand Signor of a bird!*] he directs the bill of the foremost to it; and when she has got the dirty pearl, he struts over her with an erected crest, and with an exulting chuck—a chuck-aw-aw-aw, circling round her with dropt wings, sweeping the dust in humble courtship: while the obliged she, half-shy, half-willing, by her cowring tail, prepared wings, yet seemingly affrighted eyes, and contracted neck, lets one see that she knows the barley-corn was not all he called her for.

When he comes to that part of his narrative where he mentions the proposing of the lady's maid Hannah, *or one of the young Sorlings's, to attend her, thus he writes:*

Now, Belford, canst thou imagine what I meant by proposing Hannah, or one of the girls here, for her attendant? I'll give thee a month to guess.

Thou wilt not pretend to guess, thou say'st.

Well, then, I'll tell thee.

Believing she would certainly propose to have that favourite wench about her, as soon as she was a little settled, I had caused the girl to be inquired after, with an intent to make interest, somehow or other, that a month's warning should be insisted on by her master or mistress, or by some other means,

which I had not determined upon, to prevent her coming to her. But fortune fights for me. The wench is luckily ill; a violent rheumatic disorder, which has obliged her to leave her place, confines her to her chamber. Poor Hannah! how I pity the girl! These things are very hard upon industrious servants!—I intend to make the poor wench a small present on the occasion—I know it will oblige my charmer.

And so, Jack, *pretending not to know any thing of the matter*, I pressed her to send for Hannah. She knew I had always a regard for this servant, because of her honest love to her lady: but now I have greater regard for her than ever. Calamity, though a poor servant's calamity, will rather increase than diminish good will, with a truly generous master or mistress.

As to one of the young Sorlings's attendance, there was nothing at all in proposing that; for if either of them had been chosen by *her*, and permitted by the *mother*, [*two chances in that!*] it would have been only till I had fixed upon another. And, if afterwards they had been loth to part, I could easily have given my beloved a jealousy, which would have done the business; or to the girl, who would have quitted her *country dairy*, such a relish for a *London one*, as would have made it very convenient for her to fall in love with Will; or perhaps I could have done still better for her with Lord M.'s chaplain, who is very desirous of standing well with his lord's presumptive heir.

A blessing on thy honest heart, Lovelace! thou'lt say; for thou art for providing for every body!

He gives an account of the serious part of their conversation, with no great variation from the lady's account of it: and when he comes to

that part of it, where he bids her remember, that reformation cannot be a sudden thing, he asks his friend:

Is not this fair play? Is it not dealing ingenuously? Then the observation, I will be bold to say, is founded in *truth* and *nature*. But there was a little touch of *policy* in it besides; that the lady, if I should fly out again, should not think me too gross an hypocrite: for, as I plainly told her, I was afraid, that my fits of reformation were *but* fits and sallies; but I hoped her example would fix them into habits. But it is so discouraging a thing to have my monitor so very good!—I protest I know not how to look up at her! Now, as I am thinking, if I could pull her down a little nearer to my own level; that is to say, could prevail upon her to do something that would argue *imperfection*, something *to repent of*; we should jog on much more equally, and be better able to comprehend one another: and so the comfort would be mutual, and the remorse not all on one side.

He acknowledges that he was greatly affected and pleased with the lady's serious arguments at the time; but even then *was apprehensive that his temper would not hold. Thus he writes:*

This lady says serious things in so agreeable a manner (and then her voice is all harmony when she touches a subject she is pleased with), that I could have listened to her for half a day together. But yet I am afraid, if she *falls*, as they call it, she will lose a good deal of that *pathos*, of that noble self-confidence, which gives a good person, as I now see, a visible superiority over one *not* so good.

But, after all, Belford, I would fain know why people call such free livers as you and me *hypocrites*.—That's a word I hate; and should take it very ill to be called by it. For myself, I have as good motions, and, perhaps, have them as frequently as any body: all the business is, they don't hold; or, to speak more in character, *I don't take the care some do to conceal my lapses.*

LETTER XXIII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Saturday, April 15.

Though pretty much pressed in time, and oppressed by my mother's watchfulness, I will write a few lines upon the new light that has broken in upon your gentleman; and send it by a particular hand.

I know not what to think of him upon it. He talks well; but judge him by Rowe's lines, he is certainly a *dissembler*, odious as the sin of hypocrisy, and, as he says, that other of ingratitude, are to him.

And pray, my dear, let me ask, could he have triumphed, as it is said he has done, over so many of our sex, had he not been egregiously guilty of *both* sins?

His ingenuousness is the thing that staggers me: yet is he cunning enough to know, that whoever accuses himself first, blunts the edge of an adversary's accusation.

He is certainly a man of sense: there is more hope of such a one than of a fool: and there must be a *beginning* to a reformation. These I will allow in his favour.

But this, that follows, I think, is the only way to

judge of his specious confessions and self-accusations.—Does he confess any thing that you knew not before, or that you are not likely to find out from others?—If nothing else, what does he confess to his own disadvantage? You have heard of his duels: you have heard of his seductions.—All the world has. He *owns*, therefore, what it would be to no purpose to *conceal*; and his ingenuousness is a salvo—'Why, this, madam, is no more than Mr. Lovelace *himself* acknowledges.'

Well, but what is now to be done!—You must make the best of your situation: and as you say, so say I, I hope that will not be bad: for I like all that he has proposed to you of Windsor, and his canon's house. His readiness to leave you, and go himself in quest of a lodging, likewise looks well. And I think there is nothing can be so properly done, as (whether you get to a canon's house or not) that the canon should join you together in wedlock as soon as possible.

I much approve, however, of all your cautions, of all your vigilance, and of every thing you have done, but of your *meeting* him. Yet, in my disapprobation of that, I judge by the *event* only; for who would have divined it would have concluded as it did? But he is the devil, by his own account: and had he run away with the wretched Solmes, and your more wretched brother, and been himself transported for life, he should have had my free consent for all three.

What use does he make of that Joseph Leman!—His ingenuousness, I must once more say, confounds me; but if, my dear, you can forgive your brother for the part he put that fellow upon acting, I don't know whether you ought to be angry at Lovelace. Yet I have wished fifty times, since Lovelace got you away, that you were rid of him,

whether it were by a burning fever, by hanging, by drowning, or by a broken neck, provided it were before he laid you under a necessity to go into mourning for him.

I repeat my hitherto-rejected offer. May I send it safely by your old man? I have reasons for not sending it by Hickman's servant, unless I had a bank note. Inquiring for such may cause distrust. My mother is so busy, so inquisitive—I don't love suspicious tempers.

And here she is continually in and out—I must break off.

* * *

Mr. Hickman begs his most respectful compliments to you, with offer of his services. I told him I would oblige him, because minds in trouble take kindly any body's civilities: but that he was not to imagine that he particularly obliged me by this, since I should think the man or woman either blind or stupid who admired not a person of your exalted merit for your own sake, and wished not to serve you without view to other reward than the honour of serving you.

To be sure, that was his principal motive, with great daintiness he said it: but with a kiss of his hand, and a bow to my feet, he hoped, that that fine lady's being my friend did not lessen the merit of the reverence he really had for her.

Believe me ever, what you, my dear, shall ever find me.

Your faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Sat. afternoon.

I DETAIN your messenger while I write in answer to yours; the poor old man not being very well.

You dishearten me a good deal about Mr. Lovelace. I may be too willing from my sad circumstances to think the best of him. If his pretences to reformation are *but* pretences, what must be his intent? But can the heart of man be so very vile? Can he, *dare* he, mock the Almighty? But may I not, from one very sad reflection, think better of him; that I am thrown too much into his power, to make it *necessary* for him (except he were to intend the *very utmost* villany by me) to be such a shocking hypocrite? He must, at least, be in earnest at the *time* he gives the better hopes. Surely he must. You yourself must join with me in this hope, or you could not wish me to be so dreadfully yoked.

But, after all, I had rather, much rather, be independent of him, and of his family, although I have an high opinion of them; at least till I see what my own may be brought to.—Otherwise, I think, it were best for me, at once, to cast myself into Lady Betty's protection. All would then be conducted with decency, and perhaps many mortifications would be spared me. But then I must be *his* at all adventures, and be thought to defy my own family. And shall I not first see the issue of *one* application? And yet I cannot make this till I am settled somewhere, and at a distance from him.

Mrs. Sorlings showed me a letter this morning, which she had received from her sister Greme last night; in which Mrs. Greme (hoping I would for-

give her forward zeal, if her sister thinks fit to show her letter to me) 'wishes, and that for all the noble family's sake, (and she hopes she may say for my own) that I will be pleased to yield to make his honour, as she calls him, happy.' She grounds her *officiousness*, as she calls it, upon what he was so *condescending* [her word also] to say to her yesterday, in his way to Windsor, on her *presuming* to ask if she might soon give him joy? 'That no man ever loved a woman as he loves me: that no woman ever so well deserved to be beloved: that in every conversation he admires me still more: that he loves me with such a purity, as he had never believed himself capable of, or that a mortal creature could have inspired him with; looking upon me as all *soul;* as an angel sent down to save *his;*' and a great deal more of this sort: 'but that he apprehends my consent to make him happy is at a greater distance than he wishes, and complained of the too severe restrictions I had laid upon him before I honoured him with my *confidence:* which restrictions *must be as sacred to him as if they were parts of the marriage contract,*' &c.

What, my dear, shall I say to this? How shall I take it? Mrs. Greme is a good woman. Mrs. Sorlings is a good woman. And this letter agrees with the conversation between Mr. Lovelace and me, which I thought, and still think, so agreeable *. Yet what means the man by *foregoing the opportunities he has had to declare himself?*—What mean his *complaints of my restrictions* to Mrs. Greme? He is not a bashful man.—But you say, I inspire

* This letter Mrs. Greme (with no bad design on her part) was put upon writing by Mr. Lovelace himself, as will be seen Letter xxxi.

people with an awe of me.—An awe, my dear!—As how?

I am quite petulant, fretful, and peevish, with myself, at times, to find, that I am bound to see the workings of this *subtle*, or this *giddy* spirit, which shall I call it?

How am I punished, as I frequently think, for my vanity, in hoping to be an *example* to young persons of my sex! Let me be but a *warning*, and I will now be contented. For, be my destiny what it may, I shall never be able to hold up my head again among my best friends and worthiest companions.

It is one of the cruellest circumstances that attends the faults of the inconsiderate, that she makes all who love her unhappy, and gives joy only to her own enemies, and to the enemies of her family.

What an useful lesson would this afford, were it properly inculcated at the time that the *tempted mind* was balancing upon a doubtful adventure?

You know not, my dear, the worth of a virtuous man; and, noble-minded as you are in most particulars, you partake of the common weakness of human nature, in being apt to slight what is in your own power.

You would not think of using Mr. Lovelace, were he your suitor, as you do the much worthier Mr. Hickman—would you?—You know who says in my mother's case, 'Much *will* bear, much *shall* bear, all the world through*,' Mr. Hickman, I fancy, would be glad to know the lady's name who made such an observation. He would think it hardly possible but such a one should benefit by

* See Vol. I. p. 63.

her own remark; and would be apt to wish his Miss Howe acquainted with her.

Gentleness of heart, surely, is not despicable in a man. Why, if it be, is the highest distinction a man can arrive at that of a *gentleman?*—A distinction which a prince may not deserve. For manners, more than birth, fortune, or title, are requisite in this character. Manners are indeed the essence of it. And shall it be generally said, and Miss Howe not be an exception to it (as once you wrote), that our sex are best dealt with by boisterous and unruly spirits *.

Forgive me, my dear, and love me as you used to do. For although my fortunes are changed, my heart is not: nor ever will, while it bids my pen tell you, that it must cease to beat, when it is not as much yours, as

Your
CLARISSA HARLOWE'S.

LETTER XXV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Saturday evening.

Mr. Lovelace has seen divers apartments at Windsor; but not one, he says, that he thought fit for me, and which, at the same time, answered my description.

He has been very solicitous to keep to the letter of my instructions; which looks well: and the better I like him, as, although he proposed that town, he came back dissuading me from it: for he said, that, in his journey from thence, he had thought

* See Vol. II. p. 7.

Windsor, although of his own proposal, a wrong choice; because I coveted privacy, and that was a place generally visited and admired*.

I told him, that if Mrs. Sorlings thought me not an incumbrance, I would be willing to stay here a little longer; provided he would leave me, and go to Lord M.'s or to London, whichever he thought best.

He hoped, he said, that he might suppose me absolutely safe from the insults or attempts of my brother; and, therefore, if it would make me easier, he would obey, for a few days at least.

He again proposed to send for Hannah. I told him I designed to do so, through you—and shall I beg of you, my dear, to cause the honest creature to be sent to? Your faithful Robert, I think, knows where she is. Perhaps she will be permitted to quit her place directly by allowing a month's wages, which I will repay her. He took notice of the serious humour he found me in, and of the redness of my eyes. I had just been answering your letter: and had he not approached me, on his coming off his journey, in a very respectful manner; had he not made an unexceptionable report of his inquiries, and been so ready to go from me, at the very first word; I was prepared (notwithstanding the good terms we parted upon when he set out for Windsor) to have given him a very unwelcome reception: for the contents of your last letter had so affected me, that the moment I saw him, I beheld with indignation the seducer, who had been the cause of all the evils I suffer, and have suffered.

He hinted to me, that he had received a letter

* This inference of the lady in his favour is exactly what he had hoped for. See p. 131.

from Lady Betty, and another (as I understood him) from one of the Miss Montagues. If they take notice of *me* in them, I wonder that he did not acquaint me with the contents. I am afraid, my dear, that his relations are among those who think I have taken a rash and inexcusable step. It is not to my *credit* to let *even them* know how I have been *frighted out of myself*: and yet perhaps they would hold me unworthy of their alliance, if they were to think my flight a voluntary one. O my dear, how uneasy to us are our reflections upon every doubtful occurrence, when we know we have been prevailed upon to do a wrong thing!

Sunday morning.

Ah! this man, my dear! We have had warmer dialogues than ever yet we have had. At fair argument, I find I need not fear him*; but he is such a wild, such an ungovernable creature, [*he* reformed!] that I am half-afraid of him.

He again, on my declaring myself uneasy at his stay with me here, proposed that I would put myself into Lady Betty's protection; assuring me that he thought he could not leave me at Mrs. Sorlings's with safety to myself. And upon my declining to do that, for the reasons I gave you in my last †, he urged me to make a demand of my estate.

He knew it, I told him, to be my resolution not to litigate with my father.

Nor would he put me upon it, he replied, but as the *last* thing. But if my spirit would not permit me to *be obliged*, as I called it, to any body; and yet if my relations would refuse me my own; he knew not how I could keep up that spirit, without

* See this confirmed by Mr. Lovelace, p. 54.
† See p. 140.

being put to inconveniences, which would give him infinite concern—unless-unless-unless, he said, hesitating, as if afraid to speak out—Unless I would take the only method I *could* take to obtain the possession of my own.

What is *that*, sir?

Sure the man saw by my looks, when he came with his creeping *unless's*, that I guessed what he meant.

Ah! madam, can you be at a loss to know what that method is?—They will not dispute with a *man* that right which they would contest with *you*.

Why said he with a *man* instead of with him? Yet he looked as if he wanted to be encouraged to say more.

So, sir, you would have me employ a lawyer, would you, notwithstanding what I have ever declared as to litigating with my father?

No, I would not, my dearest creature, snatching my hand, and pressing it with his lips—except you would make *me* the lawyer.

Had he said *me* at first, I should have been above the affectation of mentioning a lawyer.

I blushed. The man pursued not the subject so ardently, but that it was more easy as well as more natural to avoid it than to fall into it.

Would to heaven he might, without offending! —But I *so* over-awed him!—[*over-awed* him!—*your** notion, my dear!] And so the over-awed, bashful man went off from the subject, repeating his proposal, that I would demand my own estate, or empower some man of the law to demand it, if I *would not* [he put in] empower a happier man to demand it. But it could not be amiss, he thought, to acquaint my two trustees, that I intended to assume it.

* See p. 97 and 99.

I should know better what to do, I told him, when he was at a distance from me, and *known* to be so. I suppose, sir, that if my father should propose my return, and engage never to mention Solmes to me, nor any other man, but by *my consent*, and I agree, upon that condition, to think no more of you, you will acquiesce.

I was willing to try whether he had the regard to *all* my previous declarations which he pretended to have to *some* of them.

He was struck into confusion.

What say you, Mr. Lovelace? You know all you mean is for my good. Surely I am my own mistress: surely I need not ask your leave to make what terms I please for myself, *so long as I break none with you?*

He hemm'd twice or thrice.—Why, madam, why, madam, I cannot say—then pausing—and rising from his seat, with petulace; I see plainly enough, said he, the reason why none of my proposals can be accepted: at *last* I am to be a sacrifice to your reconciliation with your implacable family.

It has always been your respectful way, Mr. Lovelace, to treat my family in this free manner. But pray, sir, when you call *others* implacable, see that you deserve not the same censure *yourself*.

He must needs say, there was no love lost between some of my family and him; but he had not deserved of *them* what they had of *him*.

Yourself being judge, I suppose, sir?

All the world, you yourself, madam, being judge.

Then, sir, let me tell you, had you been less upon your defiances, they would not have been irritated so much against you. But nobody ever heard, that avowed despite to the relations of a person was

a proper courtship, either to that person or to her friends.

Well, madam, all that I know is, that their malice against me is such, that if you determine to sacrifice *me*, you may be reconciled when you please.

And all that I know, sir, is, that if I do give my father the power of a negative, and he will be contented with *that*, it will be but my *duty* to give it him; and if I preserve one to myself, I shall break through no obligation to *you*.

Your duty to your capricious *brother*, not to your *father*, you mean, madam.

If the dispute lay between my brother and me at *first*, surely, sir, a father may choose which party he will take.

He *may*, madam—but that exempts him not from blame for all that, if he take the wrong—

Different people will judge differently, Mr. Lovelace, of the right and the wrong. *You* judge as you please. Shall not others as *they* please? And who has a right to control a father's judgment in his own family, and in relation to his own child?

I know, madam, there is no arguing with you. But, nevertheless, I had hoped to have made myself some little merit with you, so as that I might not have been the *preliminary sacrifice* to a reconciliation.

Your hope, sir, had been better grounded, if you had had my consent to my abandoning of my father's house—

Always, madam, and for ever, to be reminded of the choice you would have made of that d—n'd Solmes—rather than—

Not so hasty! Not so rash, Mr. Lovelace! I am convinced that there was no intention to marry me to that Solmes on Wednesday.

So I am told they now give out, in order to justify themselves at your expense. Every body living, madam, is obliged to you for your kind thoughts but I.

Excuse me, *good* Mr. Lovelace [waving my hand and bowing], that I am willing to think the best of my father.

Charming creature! said he, with what a bewitching air is that said!—And with a vehemence in his manner would have snatched my hand. But I withdrew it, being much offended with him.

I think, madam, my sufferings for your sake might have entitled me to some favour.

My sufferings, sir, for your impetuous temper, set against *your* sufferings, for *my sake*, I humbly conceive, leave me very little your debtor.

Lord! madam [assuming a drolling air] what have you suffered!—Nothing but what you can easily forgive. You have been *only* made a prisoner in your father's house, by the way of doing credit to your judgment!—You have *only* had an innocent and faithful servant turned out of your service because you loved her—you have *only* had your sister's confident servant set over you, with leave to tease and affront you!—

Very well, sir!

You have *only* had an insolent brother take upon him to treat you like a slave, and as insolent a sister to undermine you in every body's favour, on pretence to keep you out of hands, which, if as vile as they vilely report, are not, however, half so vile and cruel as their own!

Go on, sir, if you please!

You have *only* been persecuted, in order to oblige you to have a sordid fellow, whom you have professed to hate, and whom every body despises! The licence has been *only* got! the parson has *only*

been had in readiness! The day, a near, a *very* near day, has been *only* fixed! And you were *only* to be searched for your correspondencies, and still closer confined, till the day came, in order to deprive you of all means of escaping the snare laid for you!—But all this you can forgive! You can wish you had stood all this; inevitable as the compulsion must have been!—And the man who, at the hazard of his life, has delivered you from all these mortifications, is the only person you *cannot* forgive!

Can't you go on, sir? You see I have patience to hear you. Can't you go on, sir?

I can, madam, with *my* sufferings: which I confess ought not to be mentioned, were I at last to be rewarded in the manner I hoped.

Your sufferings then, if you please, sir?

—Affrontingly forbidden your father's house, after encouragement given, without any reasons they knew not before, to justify the prohibition: forced upon a rencounter I wished to avoid: the first I ever, so provoked, wished to avoid. And that, because the wretch was your brother!

Wretch, sir!—And my brother!—This could be from no man breathing but from him before me!

Pardon me, madam!—But oh! how unworthy to be your brother!—The quarrel grafted upon an old one when at college; he universally known to be the aggressor; revived for views equally sordid, and injurious both to yourself and me—giving life to him who would have taken away mine!

Your *generosity* THIS, sir; not your sufferings: A little more of your *sufferings*, if you please;—I hope you do not repent that you did not murder my brother!

My private life hunted into! My morals decried! Some of the accusers not unfaulty!

That's an aspersion, sir!

Spies set upon my conduct! One hired to bribe my own servant's fidelity; perhaps to have poisoned me at last, if the honest fellow had not—

Facts, Mr. Lovelace!—Do you want facts in the display of your sufferings?—None of your *perhaps's*, I beseech you!

Menaces every day, and defiances, put into every one's mouth against me! Forced to creep about in disguises—and to watch *all hours*—

And in *all weathers*, I suppose, sir—that, I remember, was once your grievance! *In all weathers*, sir *! and all these hardships arising from yourself, not imposed by me.

—Like a thief, or an eves-dropper, proceeded he: and yet neither by birth nor alliances unworthy of *their* relation, whatever I may be and am of their admirable daughter: of whom they, every one of them, are at least *as* unworthy!—These, madam, I call sufferings: *justly* call so; if at last I am to be sacrificed to an imperfect reconciliation—*imperfect*, I say: for, can you expect to live so much as *tolerably* under the same roof, after all that has passed with that brother and sister?

O sir, sir! what sufferings have yours been! And all for my sake, I warrant!—I can never reward you for them!—Never think of me more, I beseech you—how can you have patience with me?—Nothing has been owing to your own behaviour, I presume: nothing to your defiances for defiances: nothing to your resolution declared more than once, that you *would* be related to a family, which, nevertheless, you would not stoop to ask a relation of: nothing, in short, to courses which every body blamed you for, you not think-

* See p. 11 and 15.

ing it worth your while to justify yourself. Had I not thought you used in an ungentlemanly manner, as I have heretofore told you, you had not had my notice by pen and ink*. That notice gave you a supposed security, and you generously defied my friends the more for it: and this brought upon me (perhaps not undeservedly) my father's displeasure; without which, my brother's private pique, and selfish views, would have wanted a foundation to build upon: so that for all that followed of my treatment, and your redundant *only*'s, I might thank you principally, as you may yourself for all your *sufferings*, your *mighty* sufferings!—And if, voluble sir, you have founded any merit upon them, be so good as to revoke it: and look upon *me*, with my forfeited reputation, as the only sufferer—for what—pray hear me out, sir, [for he was going to speak] have you suffered in, but your pride? Your reputation *could not* suffer: *that* it was beneath you to be solicitous about. And had you not been an unmanageable man, I should not have been driven to the extremity I now every hour, as the hour passes, deplore—with this additional reflection upon myself, that I ought not to have *begun*, or, having begun, not *continued* a correspondence with one who thought it not worth his while to clear his own character for *my sake*, or to submit to my father for his *own*, in a point wherein every father ought to have an option—

Darkness, light; light, darkness; by my soul;—just as you please to have it. O charmer of my heart! snatching my hand, and pressing it between both his, to his lips, in a strange wild way, Take me, take me to yourself: mould me as you please: I am wax in your hands; give me your own impression;

* See p. 14.

and seal me for ever yours.—We were born for each other!—You to make me happy, and save a soul—I am all error, all crime. I see what I ought to have done. But do you think, madam, I can willingly consent to be sacrificed to a partial reconciliation, in which I shall be so great, so irreparable a sufferer!—Any thing but *that*—include me in your terms: prescribe to me: promise for me as you please—put a halter about my neck, and lead me by it, upon condition of forgiveness on that disgraceful penance, and of a prostration as servile, to your father's presence (your brother absent); and I will beg his consent at his feet, and bear any thing but spurning from him, because he is your father. But to give you up upon cold conditions, d——n me [said the shocking wretch] if I either will or can!

These were his words, as near as I can remember them: for his behaviour was so stangely wild and fervent, that I was perfectly frighted. I thought he would have devoured my hand. I wished myself a thousand miles distant from him.

I told him, I by no means approved of his violent temper: he was too boisterous a man for my liking. I saw *now*, by the conversation that had passed, what was his boasted regard to my *injunctions*; and should take my measures accordingly, as he should *soon* find. And with a half-frighted earnestness I desired him to withdraw, and leave me to myself.

He obeyed: and that with extreme complaisance in his manner, but with his complexion greatly heightened, and a countenance as greatly dissatisfied.

But, on recollecting all that passed, I plainly see, that he means not, if he can help it, to leave to me the liberty of refusing him; which I had

nevertheless preserved a *right* to do; but looks upon me as *his*, by a strange sort of obligation, for having run away with me *against my will*.

Yet you see he but touches upon the edges of matrimony neither. And that at a time generally, when he has either excited my passions or apprehensions; so that I cannot at once descend. But surely this cannot be his design.—And yet such seemed to be his behaviour to my sister *, when he provoked her to refuse him, and so tamely submitted, as he did, to her refusal.—But he dare not.—What can one say of so various a man?—I am now again out of conceit with him. I wish I were fairly out of his power.

He has sent up three times to beg admittance; in the two last with unusual earnestness. But I have sent him word, I will first finish what I am about.

What to do about going from this place I cannot tell. I could stay here with all my heart, as I have said to him: the gentlewoman and her daughters are desirous that I will: although not very convenient for them, I believe, neither: but I see he will not leave me while I do—so I *must* remove somewhere.

I have long been sick of myself: and now I am more and more so. But let me not lose your good opinion. If I do, that loss will complete the misfortunes of

Your

CL. HARLOWE.

* See Vol. I. p. 11.

LETTER XXVI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Sunday night, April 16.

I MAY send to you, although you are forbid to write to me; may I not?—For that is not a *correspondence* (is it?) where letters are not answered.

I am strangely at a loss what to think of this man. He is a perfect Proteus. I can but write according to the shape he assumes at the time. Don't think *me* the changeable person, I beseech you, if in one letter I contradict what I wrote in another; nay, if I seem to contradict what I said in the same letter: for he is a perfect cameleon; or rather more variable than the cameleon: for that, it is said, cannot assume the *red* and the *white*; but this man *can*. And though *black* seems to be his natural colour, yet has he taken great pains to make me think him nothing but *white*.

But you shall judge of him as I proceed. Only, if I any where appear to you to be credulous, I beg you to set me right: for you are a stander-by, as you say in a former*.—Would to heaven I were not to play! For I think, after all, I am held to a desperate game.

Before I could finish my last to you, he sent up twice more to beg admittance. I returned for answer, that I would see him at my own time: I would neither be invaded nor prescribed to.

Considering how we parted, and my delaying his *audience*, as he sometimes calls it, I expected him to be in no very good humour, when I admit-

* See p. 44.

ted of his visit; and by what I wrote, you will conclude that *I* was not. Yet mine soon changed, when I saw his extreme humility at his entrance, and heard what he had to say.

I have a letter, madam, said he, from Lady Betty Lawrance, and another from my cousin Charlotte. But of these more by-and-by. I came now to make my humble acknowledgment to you, upon the arguments that passed between us so lately.

I was silent, wondering what he was driving at.

I am a most unhappy creature, proceeded he: unhappy from a strange impatiency of spirit, which I cannot conquer. It always brings upon me deserved humiliation. But it is more laudable to acknowledge than to persevere, when under the power of conviction.

I was still silent.

I have been considering what you proposed to me, madam, that I should acquiesce with such terms as you should think proper to comply with, in order to a reconciliation with your friends.

Well, sir.

And I find all just, all right, on your side; and all impatience, all inconsideration, on mine.

I stared, you may suppose. Whence this change, sir? and so soon?

I am so much convinced that you must be in the right in all you think fit to insist upon, that I shall for the future mistrust myself; and, if it be possible, whenever I differ with you, take an hour's time for recollection, before I give way to that vehemence, which an opposition, to which I have not been accustomed, too often gives me.

All this is mighty good, sir: but to what does it tend?

Why, madam, when I came to consider what you had proposed as to the terms of reconciliation with

your friends; and when I recollected, that you had always *referred to yourself* to *approve* or *reject* me, according to my *merits* or *demerits*: I plainly saw, that it was rather a *condescension* in you, that you were pleased to ask my consent to those terms than that you were imposing a *new law*: and I now, madam, beg your pardon for my impatience: whatever terms you think proper to come into with your relations, which will enable you to honour me with the *conditional* effect of your promise to me, to these be pleased to consent: and if I lose you, insupportable as that thought is to me, yet, as it must be by my own fault, I ought to thank myself for it.

What think you, Miss Howe?—Do you believe he can have any view in this?—I cannot see any he could have; and I thought it best, as he put it in so right a manner, to appear not to doubt the sincerity of his confession, and to accept of it as sincere.

He then read to me part of Lady Betty's letter; turning down the beginning, which was a little too severe upon him, he said, for my eye: and I believe, by the style, the remainder of it was in a *corrective* strain.

It was too plain, I told him, that he must have great faults, that none of his relations could write to him, but with a mingled censure for some bad action.

And it is as plain, my dearest creature, said he, that you, who know not of any such faults, but by surmise, are equally ready to condemn me.—Will not charity allow you to infer, that *their* charges are no better grounded?—And that my principal fault has been carelessness of my character, and too little solicitude to clear myself when aspersed? Which, I do assure you, is the case.

Lady Betty, in her letter, expresses herself in the most obliging manner in relation to me. 'She wishes him so to behave, as to encourage me to make him soon happy. She desires her compliments to me; and expresses her impatience to see, as her niece, so *celebrated a lady* [those are her high words]. She shall take it for an honour, she says, to be put into a way to oblige me. She hopes I will not too long delay the ceremony; because that performed, will be to her, and to Lord M. and Lady Sarah, a sure pledge of her nephew's merits and good behaviour.

She says, 'She was always sorry to hear of the hardships I had met with on his account: that he will be the most ungrateful of men, if he make not all up to me: and that she thinks it incumbent upon all their family, to supply to me the lost favour of my own: and, for her part, nothing of that kind, she bids him assure me, shall be wanting.'

Her ladyship observes, 'That the treatment he had received from my family, would have been more unaccountable than it was, with such natural and accidental advantages as he had, had it not been owing to his own careless manners. But she hopes that he will convince the Harlowe family, that they had thought worse of him than he had deserved; since now it was in his power to establish his character for ever. This she prays to God to enable him to do, as well for his own honour as for the honour of their *house*,' was the magnificent word.

She concludes with 'desiring to be informed of our nuptials the moment they are celebrated, that she may be with the earliest in felicitating me on the happy occasion.'

But her ladyship gives me no direct invitation to attend her before the marriage, which I might have expected from what he had told me.

He then showed me part of Miss Montague's

more sprightly letter, 'congratulating him upon the 'honour he had obtained, of the *confidence of so admirable a* lady.' These are her words. *Confidence*, my dear! Nobody, indeed, as you say, will believe otherwise, were they to be told the truth: and you see that Miss Montague (and all his family, I suppose) think the step I have taken an *extraordinary* one. '*She* also wishes for his speedy nuptials; and to see her new cousin at M. Hall: as to Lord M. she tells him and her sister, and in general all the well-wishers of their family.

'Whenever this happy day shall be passed, she proposes, she says, to attend me, and to make one in my train to M. Hall, if his lordship shall continue as ill of the gout as he is at present. But that should he get better, he will himself attend me, she is sure, and conduct me thither: and afterwards quit either of his three seats to us, till we shall be settled to our mind.'

This young lady says nothing in excuse for not meeting me on the road, or St. Alban's, as he had made me expect she would: yet mentions *her having been indisposed*. Mr. Lovelace had also told me, that Lord M. *was ill of the gout*; which Miss Montague's letter confirms.

But why did not the man show me these letters last night? Was he afraid of giving me too much pleasure?

LETTER XXVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

You may believe, my dear, that these letters put me in good humour with him. He saw it in my countenance, and congratulated himself upon it. Yet I cannot but repeat my wonder, that I could

not have the contents of them communicated to me last night *.

He then urged me to go directly to Lady Betty's, on the strength of her letter.

But how, said I, can I do that, were I even out of all hope of a reconciliation with my friends, (which yet, however unlikely to be effected, is my duty to *attempt*) as her ladyship has given me no particular invitation?

That, he was sure, was owing to her doubt that it would be accepted—else she had done it with the greatest pleasure in the world.

That doubt itself, I said, was enough to deter me: since her ladyship, who knew so well the boundaries of the fit and the unfit, by her not expecting I would accept of an invitation, had she given it, would have reason to think me very forward if I had accepted it; and much more forward to go without it. Then, said I, I thank *you*, sir, I have no clothes fit to go any whither, or to be seen by any body.

O, I was fit to appear in the drawing-room, were full dress and jewels to be excused; and should make the most amiable [he must mean *extraordinary*] figure there. He was astonished at the elegance of my dress. By what art he knew not, but I appeared to such advantage, as if I had a different suit every day. Besides, his cousins Montague would supply me with all I wanted for the present; and he would write to Miss Charlotte accordingly, if I would give him leave.

Do you think me the jay in the fable? said I. Would you have me visit the owners of the borrowed dresses in their own clothes? Surely, Mr.

* The reader will see how Miss Howe accounts for this in p. 188.

Lovelace, you think I have either a very low or a very confident mind.

Would I choose to go to London (for a few days only) in order to furnish myself with clothes?

Not at your expense, sir, said I, in an angry tone.

I could not have appeared in earnest to him, in my displeasure at his artful contrivances to get me away, if I were not occasionally to show my real fretfulness upon the destitute condition to which he has reduced me. When people set out wrong together, it is very difficult to avoid recriminations.

He wished he knew but my mind — that should direct him in his proposals, and it would be his delight to observe it, whatever it were.

My mind is, that you, sir, should leave me—how often must I tell you so?

If I were any where but here, he would obey me, he said, if I insisted upon it. But if I would assert my right, that would be infinitely preferable, in his opinion, to any other measure *but one (which he durst only hint at)*: for then admitting *his* visits, or refusing them, as I pleased, (granting a correspondence by letter only) it would appear to all the world, that what I had done was but in order to do myself justice.

How often, Mr. Lovelace, must I repeat, that I will not litigate with my father? Do you think that my unhappy circumstances will alter my notions of my own duty so far as I shall be enabled to perform it? How can I obtain possession without litigation, and but by my trustees? One of them will be against me; the other is abroad. Then the remedy proposed by this measure, were I *disposed* to fall in with it, will require time to bring it to effect; and what I want is *present* independence, and your *immediate* absence.

Upon his soul, the wretch swore, he did not think it safe, for the reasons he had before given, to leave me here. He wished I would think of some place, to which I should like to go. But he must take the liberty to say, that he hoped his behaviour had not been so exceptionable, as to make me so *very* earnest for his absence in the interim: and the less, surely, as I was almost *eternally* shutting up myself from him, although he presumed to assure me, that he never went from me but with a corrected heart, and with strengthened resolutions of improving by my example.

Eternally shutting myself up from you! repeated I —I hope, sir, that you will not pretend to take it *amiss*, that I expect to be uninvaded in my retirements. I hope you don't think me so weak a creature (novice as you have found me in a very capital instance) as to be fond of occasions to hear your fine speeches, especially as no *differing circumstances* require your over-frequent visits; nor that I am to be addressed to as if I thought hourly professions *needful* to assure me of your honour.

He seemed a little disconcerted.

You know, Mr. Lovelace, proceeded I, why I am so earnest for your absence. It is, that I may appear to the world independent of you; and in hopes, by that means, to find it less difficult to set on foot a reconciliation with my friends. And now let me add (in order to make you easier as to the terms of that hoped-for reconciliation) that since I find I have the good fortune to stand so well with your relations, I will, from time to time, acquaint you, by letter, when you are absent, with every step I shall take, and with every overture that shall be made to me: but not with an intention to render myself accountable to you, neither, as to my acceptance or non-acceptance of those overtures. They know that I have a power given me

by my grandfather's will, to bequeath the estate he left me, with other of his bounties, in a way that may affect them, though not absolutely from them; this *consideration*, I hope, will procure me *some* from them when their passion subsides, and when they know I am independent of you.

Charming reasoning! And let him tell me, that the assurance I had given him was *all he wished for*. It was *more* than he could ask. What a happiness to have a woman of honour and generosity to depend upon! Had he, on his first entrance into the world, met with such a one, he had never been other than a man of strict virtue.—But all, he hoped, was for the best; since, in that case, he had never perhaps had the happiness he had now in view, because his relations had been always urging him to marry; and that before he had the honour to know me. And now, as he had not been so bad as some people's malice reported him to be, he hoped he should have near as much merit in his repentance as if he had never erred.—A fine rakish notion and hope! And too much encouraged, I doubt, my dear, by the generality of our sex!

This brought on a more serious question or two. You'll see by it what a creature an unmortified libertine is.

I asked him if he knew what he had said alluded to a sentence in the best of books, *That there was more joy in heaven*—

He took the words out of my mouth,

*Over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons, which need no repentance**, were his words.

Yes, madam, I thought of it as soon as I said it, but not before. I have read the story of the pro-

* Luke xv. 7. The parable is concerning the ninety-nine sheep, not the prodigal son, as Mr. Lovelace erroneously imagines.

digal son, I'll assure you: and one day, when I am settled as I hope to be, will write a dramatic piece on the subject. I have at times had it in my head; and you will be too ready, perhaps, to allow me to be qualified for it.

You so lately, sir, stumbled at a word, with which you must be better acquainted, ere you can be thoroughly master of such a subject, that I am amazed you should know any thing of the Scripture, and be so ignorant of that*.

O, madam, I have read the Bible as a fine piece of ancient history—but as I hope to be saved, it has for some few years past made me so uneasy, when I have popped upon some passages in it, that I have been forced to run to music or company to divert myself.

Poor wretch! lifting up my hands and eyes.

The denunciations come so slap-dash upon one, so unceremoniously, as I may say, without even the By-your-leave of a rude London chairman, that they overturn one, horse and man, as St. Paul was overturned. There's another Scripture allusion, madam! The light, in short, as his was, is too glaring to be borne.

O, sir, do you want to be complimented into repentance and salvation? But pray, Mr. Lovelace, do you mean any thing at all, when you swear so often as you do, *By your soul*, or bind an asseveration with the words, *As you hope to be saved?*

O my beloved creature, shifting his seat; let us call another cause.

Why, sir, don't *I* neither use *ceremony* enough with you?

Dearest madam, forbear for the present: I am but in my noviciate. Your foundation must be laid brick by brick: you'll hinder the progress of

* See p. 122.

the good work you would promote, if you tumble in a whole waggon-load at once upon me.

Lord bless me, thought I, what a character is that of a libertine! What a creature am I, who have risked what I have risked with such a one! —What a task before me, if my hopes continue, of reforming such a wild Indian as this!—Nay worse than a wild Indian; for a man who errs with his eyes open, and against conviction, is a thousand times worse for what he knows, and much harder to be reclaimed, than if he had never known any thing.

I was equally shocked *at* him, and concerned *for* him; and having laid so few bricks (to speak to his allusion), and those so ill-cemented, I was as willing as the gay inconsiderate, to call another cause, as he termed it—another cause, too, more immediately pressing upon me, from my uncertain situation.

I said, I took it for granted, that he assented to the reasoning he seemed to approve, and would leave me. And then I asked him, what he really, and in his most deliberate mind, would advise me to, in my present situation? He must needs see, I said, that I was at a great loss what to resolve upon; entirely a stranger to London, having no adviser, no protector, at present: himself, he must give me leave to tell him, greatly deficient in *practice*, if not in the *knowledge*, of those decorums, which, I had supposed, were always to be found in a man of birth, fortune, and education.

He imagines himself, I find, to be a very polite man, and cannot bear to be thought otherwise. He put up his lip—I am sorry for it, madam—a man of breeding, a man of politeness, give me leave to say [colouring], is much more of a black

swan with *you,* than with any lady I ever met with.

Then that is your misfortune, Mr. Lovelace, as well as mine, at present. Every woman of discernment, I am confident, knowing what I know of you now, would say as I say [*I had a mind to mortify a pride; that I am sure deserves to be mortified*]; that your politeness is not regular, nor constant. It is not *habit.* It is too much seen by fits and starts, and sallies, and those not spontaneous. You must be *reminded* into them.

O Lord! O Lord!—Poor I!—was the light, yet the half-angry wretch's self-pitying expression!

I proceeded.—Upon my word, sir, you are not the accomplished man, which your talents and opportunities would have led one to expect you to be. You are indeed in your noviciate, as to every laudable attainment.

LETTER XXVIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

In Continuation.

As this subject was introduced by himself, and treated so lightly by him, I was going on to tell him more of my mind; but he interrupted me—Dear, dear madam, spare me. I am sorry that I have lived to this hour for nothing at all. But surely you could not have quitted a subject so much more agreeable, and so much more *suitable,* I will say, to our present situation, if you had not too cruel a pleasure in mortifying a man, who the less needed to be mortified, as he *before* looked up to you with a diffidence in his own merits too great

to permit him to speak half his mind to you. Be pleased but to return to the subject we were upon; and at another time I will gladly embrace correction from the only lips in the world so qualified to give it.

You talk of reformation sometimes, Mr. Lovelace, and in so talking, acknowledge errors. But I see you can very ill bear the reproof, for which perhaps you are not solicitous to avoid *giving* occasion. Far be it from me to take delight in finding fault; I should be glad for both our sakes, since my situation is what it is, that I could do nothing but praise you. But failures which affect a mind that need not be very delicate to be affected by them, are too glaring to be passed over in silence by a person who wishes to be thought in earnest in her own duties.

I admire your delicacy, madam, again interrupted he. Although I suffer by it, yet would I not have it otherwise: indeed I would not, when I consider of it. It is an angelic delicacy, which sets you above all our sex, and even above your own. It is *natural* to *you*, madam; so you may not think it extraordinary: but there is nothing like it on earth, said the flatterer.—What company has he kept?

But let us return to the former subject—you were so good as to ask me, what I would advise you to do: I want but to make you easy; I want but to see you fixed to your liking: your faithful Hannah with you, your reconciliation with those to whom you wish to be reconciled, set on foot, and in a train. And now let me mention to you different expedients; in hopes that some one of them may be acceptable to you.

'I will go to Mrs. Howe, or to Miss Howe, or

to whomsoever you would have me to go, and endeavour to prevail upon them to receive you*.

'Do you incline to go to Florence to your Cousin Morden? I will furnish you with an opportunity of going thither, either by sea to Leghorn, or by land through France. Perhaps I may be able to procure one of the ladies of my family to attend you. Either Charlotte or Patty would rejoice in such an opportunity of seeing France and Italy. As for myself, I will only be your escort, in disguise, if you will have it so, even in your *livery*, that your punctilio may not receive offence by my attendance.'

I told him, I would consider of all he had said: but that I hoped for a line or two from my aunt Hervey, if not from my sister, to both of whom I had written; which, if I were to be so favoured, might help to determine me. Meantime, if he would withdraw, I would particularly consider of this proposal of his, in relation to my cousin Morden. And if it held its weight with me, so far as to write for your opinion upon it, he should know my mind in an hour's time.

He withdrew with great respect: and in an hour's time returned. And then I told him it was unnecessary to trouble you for your opinion about it. My Cousin Morden was soon expected. If he were not, I could not admit him to accompany me to him upon any condition. It was highly improbable that I should obtain the favour

* The reader, perhaps, need not be reminded that he had taken care from the first (See Vol. I. p. 216.) to deprive her of any protection from Mrs. Howe. See in his next Letter, p. 182. a repeated account of the same artifices, and his exultations upon his inventions to impose upon two such watchful ladies as Clarissa and Miss Howe.

of either of his cousins' company: and if that *could* be brought about, it would be the same thing in the world's eye, as if he went himself.

This led us into another conversation: which shall be the subject of my next.

LETTER XXIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

In Continuation.

Mr. Lovelace told me, that on the supposition that his proposal in relation to my cousin Morden might not be accepted, he had been studying to find out, if possible, some other expedient that might be agreeable, in order to convince me, that he preferred my satisfaction to his own.

He then offered to go himself, and procure my Hannah to come and attend me. As I had declined the service of either of the young Mrs. Sorlings's, he was extremely solicitous, he said, that I should have a servant, in whose integrity I might confide.

I told him, that you would be so kind, as to send to engage Hannah, if possible.

If any thing, he said, should prevent Hannah from coming, suppose he himself waited upon Miss Howe, to desire her to lend me *her* servant till I was provided to my mind?

I said, your mother's high displeasure at the step I had taken (as *she* supposed, voluntarily) had deprived me of any open assistance of that sort from *you*.

He was amazed, so much as Mrs. Howe herself used to admire me, and so great an influence as

Miss Howe was supposed, and deserved to have over her mother, that Mrs. Howe should take upon herself to be so much offended with me. He wished, that the man who took such pains to keep up and inflame the passions of my father and uncles, were not at the bottom of this mischief too.

I was afraid, I said, that my brother *was*: or else my uncle Antony, I dared to say, would not have taken such pains to set Mrs. Howe against me, as I understood he had done.

Since I had declined visiting Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, he asked me, if I would admit of a visit from his cousin Mountague, and accept of a servant of hers for the present?

That was not, I said, an unacceptable proposal: but I would first see, if my friends would send me my clothes, that I might not make such a giddy and runaway appearance to any of his relations.

If I pleased, he would take another journey to Windsor, to make a more particular inquiry amongst the canons, or in any worthy family.

Were not his objections as to the publicness of the place, I asked him, as strong now as before?

I remember, my dear, in one of your former letters, you mentioned London as the most private place to be in*: and I said, that since he made such pretences against leaving me here, as showed he had no intention to do so; and since he engaged to go from me, and leave me to pursue my own measures, if I were elsewhere; and since his presence made these lodgings inconvenient to me; I should not be disinclined to go to London, did I know any body there.

* See Vol. II. p. 257.

As he had several times proposed London to me, I expected that he would eagerly have embraced that motion from me. But he took not ready hold of it: yet I thought his eye approved of it.

We are both great watchers of each other's eyes; and indeed seem to be more than half afraid of each other.

He then made a grateful proposal to me; 'that I would send for my Norton to attend me *.'

He saw by my eyes, he said, that he had at last been happy in an expedient, which would answer the wishes of us both. Why, said he, did not I think of it before?—And, snatching my hand, Shall I write, madam? shall I send? shall I go and fetch the worthy woman myself?

After a little consideration, I told him, that this was *indeed* a grateful motion: but that I apprehended, it would put her to a difficulty, which she would not be able to get over; as it would make a woman of her known prudence appear to countenance a fugitive daughter, in opposition to her parents; and as her coming to me would deprive her of my mother's favour, without its being in my power to make it up to her.

O my beloved creature! said he, *generously enough*, let not this be an obstacle. I will do every thing for Mrs. Norton you wish to have done.—Let me go for her.

More coolly than perhaps his generosity deserved, I told him, it was impossible but I must soon hear from my friends. I should not, meantime, embroil any body with them. Not Mrs. Norton especially, from whose interest in, and

* The reader is referred to Mr. Lovelace's next Letter, for his motives in making the several proposals of which the lady is willing to think so well.

mediation with, my mother, I might expect some good, were she to keep herself in a neutral state: that besides, the good woman had a mind above her fortune; and would sooner want, than be beholden to any body improperly.

Improperly! said he.—Have not persons of merit a *right* to all the benefits conferred upon them?—Mrs. Norton is so good a woman, that I shall think she lays me under an obligation, if she will put it in my power to serve her; although she were *not* to augment it, by giving me the opportunity, at the same time, of contributing to your pleasure and satisfaction.

How could this man, with such powers of right thinking, be so far depraved by evil habits, as to disgrace his talents by wrong acting?

Is there not room, after all, thought I, at the time, to hope (as he so lately led me to hope) that the example it will behove me, for *both* our sakes, to endeavour to set him, may influence him to a change of manners, in which both may find our account?

Give me leave, sir, said I, to tell you, there is a strange mixture in your mind. You must have taken *pains* to suppress many good motions and reflections, as they arose, or levity must have been surprisingly predominant in it.—But as to the subject we were upon, there is no taking any resolutions till I hear from my friends.

Well, madam, I can only say, I would find out some expedient, if I could, that should be agreeable to you. But since I cannot, will you be so good as to tell me, what you would wish to have done? Nothing in the world but I will comply with, excepting leaving you here, at such a distance from the place I shall be in, if any thing should happen; and in a place where my gossip-

ing rascals have made me in a manner public, for want of proper cautions at first.

These vermin, added he, have a pride they can hardly rein-in, when they serve a man of family. They boast of their master's pedigree and descent, as if they were related to him. Nor is any thing they know of him, or of his affairs, a secret to one another, were it a matter that would hang him.

If so, thought I, men of family should take care to give them subjects worth boasting of.

I am quite at a loss, said I, what to do or whither to go. Would you, Mr. Lovelace, in earnest, advise me to think of going to London?

And I looked at him with steadfastness. But nothing could I gather from his looks.

At first, madam, said he, I was for proposing London, as I was then more apprehensive of pursuit. But as your relations seem cooler on that head, I am the more indifferent about the place you go to.—So as *you* are pleased, so as *you* are easy, I shall be happy.

This indifference of his to London, I cannot but say, made me incline the more to go thither. I asked him (to hear what he would say) if he could recommend me to any *particular place* in London?

No, he said: none that was fit for me, or that I should like. His friend Belford, indeed, had very handsome lodgings near Soho Square, at a relation's whose wife was a woman of virtue and honour. These, as Mr. Belford was generally in the country, he could borrow till I were better accommodated.

I was resolved to refuse these at the first mention, as I should any other he had named. Nevertheless, I will see, thought I, if he has really thoughts of these for me. If I break off the talk here, and he resume this proposal with earnest-

ness in the morning, I shall apprehend, that he is less indifferent than he seems to be, about my going to London; and that he has already a lodging in his eye for me. And then I will not go at all.

But after such generous motions from him, I really think it a little barbarous to act and behave as if I thought him capable of the blackest and most ungrateful baseness. But his character, his principles, are so faulty!—He is so light, so vain, so various, that there is no certainty that he will be next hour what he is this. Then, my dear, I have no guardian now; no father, no mother! only God and my vigilance to depend upon. And I have no reason to expect a miracle in my favour.

Well, sir, said I, [rising to leave him] something must be resolved upon: but I will postpone this subject till to-morrow morning.

He would fain have engaged me longer; but I said I would see him as early as he pleased in the morning. He might think of any convenient place in London, or near it, meantime.

And so I retired from him. As I do from my pen; hoping for better rest for the few hours that remain of this night, than I have had of a long time.

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XXX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

In Continuation.

Monday morning, April 17.

Late as I went to bed, I have had very little rest. Sleep and I have quarrelled; and although I court

it, it will not be friends. I hope its fellow-irreconcileables at Harlowe Place enjoy its balmy comforts. Else, that will be an aggravation of my fault. My brother and sister, I dare say, want it not.

Mr. Lovelace, who is an early riser as well as I, joined me in the garden about six; and, after the usual salutations, asked me to resume our last night's subject. It was upon lodgings at London, he said.

I think you mentioned one to me, sir—Did you not?

Yes, madam, [but watching the turn of my countenance] rather as what you would be welcome to, than perhaps approve of.

I believe so too. To go to town upon an *uncertainty*, I own, is not agreeable: but to be obliged to any persons of your acquaintance, when I want to be thought independent of you; and to a person especially, to whom my friends are to direct to me, if they vouchsafe to take notice of me at all; is an absurd thing to mention.

He did not mention it as what he imagined I would accept, but only to confirm to me what he had said, that he himself knew of none fit for me.

Has not your family, madam, some one tradesman they deal with, who has conveniences of this kind? I would make it worth such a person's while to keep the secret of your being at his house. Traders are dealers in pins, said he; and will be more obliged by a penny customer, than by a pound present, because it is in their way:—yet will refuse neither.

My father's tradesmen, I said, would, no doubt, be the first employed to find me out. So that *that* proposal was as wrong as the other. And who is it that a creature so lately in favour with

all her friends can apply to, in such a situation as mine, but must be (at least) equally the friends of her relations.

We had a good deal of discourse upon the same topic. But, at last, the result was this—He wrote a letter to one Mr. Doleman, a married man, of fortune and character, (I excepting to Mr. Belford) desiring him to provide decent apartments ready furnished [*I had told him what they should be*] for a single woman; consisting of a bedchamber; another for a maid-servant; with the use of a dining-room or parlour. This letter he gave me to peruse; and then sealed it up, and dispatched it away in my presence, by one of his own servants, who having business in town, is to bring back an answer.

I attend the issue of it; holding myself in readiness to set out for London, unless you, my dear, advise the contrary.

LETTER XXXI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sat. Sunday, Monday.

He gives, in several letters, the substance of what is contained in the last seven of the lady's.

He tells his friend, that calling at the Lawn, in his way to M. Hall (for he owns that he went not to Windsor), he found the letters from Lady Betty Lawrance, and his cousin Mountague, which Mrs. Greme was about sending to him by a special messenger.

He gives the particulars from Mrs. Greme's report, of what passed between the lady and her, as in p. 21—23, and makes such declarations to Mrs.

Greme of his honour and affection to the lady, as put her upon writing the letter to her sister Sorlings, the contents of which are given in *p.* 140, 141.

He then accounts, as follows, for the serious humour he found her in on his return:

Upon such good terms when we parted, I was surprised to find so solemn a brow upon my return, and her charming eyes red with weeping. But when I had understood she had received letters from Miss Howe, it was natural to imagine that that little devil had put her out of humour with me.

It is easy for me to perceive, that my charmer is more sullen when she receives, and has perused, a letter from that vixen, than at other times. But as the sweet maid shows, even then, more of *passive grief*, than of *active spirit*, I hope she is rather lamenting than plotting. And, indeed, for what now should she plot? when I am become a reformed man, and am hourly improving in my morals?—Nevertheless, I must contrive some way or other to get at their correspondence—only to see the turn of it; that's all.

But no attempt of this kind must be made yet. A detected invasion in an article so sacred would ruin me beyond retrieve. Nevertheless, it vexes me to the heart to think that she is hourly writing her whole mind on all that passes between her and me, I under the same roof with her, yet kept at such awful distance, that I dare not break into a correspondence, that may perhaps be a means to defeat all my devices.

Would it be *very* wicked, Jack, to knock her messenger o' the head, as he is carrying my beloved's letters, or returning with Miss Howe's?—

to attempt to bribe him, and not succeed, would utterly ruin me. And the man seems to be one *used to poverty*, one who can sit down satisfied with it, and enjoy it; contented with hand-to-mouth conveniences, and not aiming to live better to-morrow, than he does to-day, and than he did yesterday. Such a one is above temptation, unless it could come clothed in the guise of *truth* and *trust*. What likelihood of corrupting a man who has no hope, no ambition?

Yet the rascal has but *half* life, and groans under that. Should I be answerable in his case for a *whole* life?—But hang the fellow! let him live. Were I a king, or a minister of state, an Antonio Perez *, it were another thing. And yet, on second thoughts, am I not a *rake*, as it is called? and who ever knew a rake stick at any thing? But thou knowest, Jack, that the greatest half of my wickedness is vapour, to show my invention; and to prove that I *could* be mischievous if I would.

When he comes to that part, where the lady says (p. 149) in a sarcastic way waving her hand, and bowing, 'Excuse me, *good* Mr. Lovelace, that I am willing to think the best of my father,' *he gives a description of her air and manner, greatly to her advantage; and says,*

I could hardly forbear taking her into my arms upon it, in spite of an expected *tempest*. So much wit, so much beauty, such a lively manner, and such exceeding quickness and penetration! O

* Antonio Perez was first minister of Philip II. king of Spain, by whose command he caused Don Juan de Escovedo to be assassinated; which brought on his own ruin, through the perfidy of his viler master. *Gedde's Tracts*.

Belford! she must be no-body's but mine. I can now account for, and justify Herod's command to destroy Mariamne, if he returned not alive from his interview with Cæsar: for were I to know, that it were but probable, that any other man were to have this charming creature, even after my death, the very thought would be enough to provoke me to cut that man's throat, were he a prince.

I may be deemed by this lady a rapid, a boisterous lover—and *she* may like me the less for it: but all the ladies I have met with till now, loved to raise a tempest, and to enjoy it: nor did they ever raise it, but I enjoyed it too!—Lord send us once happily to London.

Mr. Lovelace gives the following account of his rude rapture, when he seized her hand, and put her, by his WILD *manner, as she expresses it, (p. 152, 153) into such terror.*

Darkness and light, I swore, were convertible at her pleasure: she could make any subject plausible. I was all error: she all perfection. And I snatched her hand; and, more than kissed it; I was ready to devour it. There was, I believe, a kind of phrensy in my manner, which threw her into a panic, like that of Semele perhaps, when the Thunderer, in all his majesty, surrounded with ten thousand celestial burning-glasses, was about to scorch her into a cinder.

* * *

HAD not my heart misgiven me, and had I not, just in time, recollected that she was not so much in my power, but that she might abandon me at her pleasure, having more friends in that house than I had, I should at that moment have made

offers, that would have decided all, one way or other—But, apprehending that I had shown too much meaning in my passion, I gave it another turn.—But little did the charmer think what an escape either she or I had (as the event might have proved) from the sudden gust of passion, which had like to have blown me into her arms. She was born, I told her, to make me happy, and to save a soul. * * * *

He gives the rest of his vehement speech pretty nearly in the same words as the lady gives them. And then proceeds :

I SAW she was frighted: and she would have had reason, had the scene been London: and that place in London, which I have in view to carry her to. She confirmed me in my apprehension, that I had alarmed her too much: she told me, that she saw what my boasted regard to her injunctions was; and she would take proper measures upon it, as I should soon find: that she was shocked at my violent airs; and if I hoped any favour from her, I must that instant withdraw, and leave her to her recollection.

She pronounced this in such a manner, as showed she was set upon it; and, having stepped out of the *gentle*, the *polite* part I had so newly engaged to act, I thought ready obedience was the best atonement. And indeed I was sensible, from her anger and repulses, that I wanted time myself for recollection. And so I withdrew, with the same veneration as a petitioning subject would withdraw from the presence of his sovereign. But, oh! Belford, had she had but the least patience with me—had she but made me think, that she would forgive this initiatory ardour—surely she will not be always thus guarded.—

I had not been a moment by myself, but I was sensible, that I had half forfeited my newly-assumed character. It is exceedingly difficult, thou seest, for an honest man to act in disguises: as the poet says, *thrust Nature back with a pitchfork, it will return.* I recollected, that what she had insisted upon was really a part of that declared will, before she left her father's house, to which in another case (to humble her) I had pretended to have an inviolable regard. And when I remembered her words, of *taking her measures accordingly,* I was resolved to sacrifice a leg or an arm to make all up again, before she had time to determine upon any new measures.

How seasonably to this purpose have come in my aunt's and cousin's letters!

* * *

I HAVE sent in again and again to implore her to admit me to her presence. But she will conclude a letter she is writing to Miss Howe, before she will see me.—I suppose, to give an account of what has just passed.

* * *

CURSE upon her perverse tyranny! How she makes me wait for an humble audience, though she has done writing some time! a prince begging for her upon his knees should not prevail upon me to spare her, if I can but get her to London—Oons! Jack, I believe I have bit my lip through for vexation!—but one day *hers* shall smart for it.

Mr. Lovelace beginning a new date, gives an account of his admittance, and of the conversation that followed: which differing only in style from that the lady gives in the next letter, is omitted.

He collects the lady's expressions, which his pride cannot bear: such as, that he is a stranger to the decorums that she thought inseparable from a man of birth and education; *and* that he is not the accomplished man he imagines himself to be; *and threatens to remember them against her.*

He values himself upon his proposals and speeches, which he gives to his friend pretty much to the same purpose that the lady does in her four last letters.

After mentioning his proposal to her that she would borrow a servant from Miss Howe, till Hannah could come, he writes as follows:

Thou seest, Belford, that my charmer has no notion, that Miss Howe herself is but a puppet danced upon my wires at second or third hand. To outwit, and impel, as I please, two *such girls* as these, who think they know every thing; and, by taking advantage of the pride and ill-nature of the old ones of both families, to play *them* off likewise at the very time they think they are doing me spiteful displeasure; what charming revenge!—then the sweet creature, when I wished that her *brother* was not at the bottom of Mrs. Howe's resentment, to tell me, that she was afraid he *was*, or her uncle would not have appeared against her to that lady!—pretty dear! how innocent!

But don't think me the *cause* neither of her family's malice and resentment. It is all in their hearts. I work but with their materials. They, if left to their own wicked direction, would perhaps express their revenge by fire and faggot; that is to say, by the private dagger, or by Lord Chief Justice's warrants, by law, and so forth: I only point the lightning, and teach it where to

dart, without the thunder. In other words, I only guide the effects: the cause is in their malignant hearts: and while I am doing a little mischief, I prevent a great deal.

Thus he exults on her mentioning London.

I wanted her to propose London herself. This made me again mention Windsor. If you would have a woman do one thing, you must always propose another, and that the very contrary: the sex! the very sex! as I hope to be saved!—Why, Jack, they lay a man under a necessity to deal doubly with them! And, when they find themselves outwitted, they cry out upon an honest fellow, who has been too hard for them at their own weapons.

I could hardly contain myself. My heart was at my throat.—Down, down, said I to myself, exuberant exultation! A sudden cough befriended me; I again turned to her, all as *indifferenced over* as a girl at the first long-expected question, who waits for two more. I heard out the rest of her speech; and when she had done, instead of saying any thing to her of London, I advised her *to send for her Mrs. Norton.*

As I *knew* she would be afraid of lying under obligation, I could have proposed to do so much for the good woman and her son, as would have made her resolve that I should do nothing: this, however, not merely to avoid expense. But there was no such thing as allowing of the presence of Mrs. Norton. I might as well have had her mother or her aunt Hervey with her. Hannah, had she been able to come, and had she actually come, I could have done well enough with. What do I keep fellows idling in the country for, but to fall

in love, and even to marry those whom I would have them to marry? Nor, upon second thoughts, would the presence of her Norton, or of her aunt, or even of her mother, have saved the dear creature, had I decreed her fall.

How unequal is a modest woman to the adventure, when she throws herself into the power of a rake! Punctilio will, at any time, stand for reason with such an one. She cannot break through a well tested modesty. None but the impudent little rogues, who can name the parson and the church before you think of either, and undress and go to bed before you the next hour, should think of running away with a man.

* * *

I AM in the right train now. Every hour, I doubt not, will give me an increasing interest in the affections of this proud beauty. I have just carried *unpoliteness* far enough to *make her afraid of me;* and to show her, that I am *no whiner*. Every instance of politeness, now, will give me double credit with her. My next point will be to make her acknowledge a *lambent* flame, a preference of me to all other men at least: and then my happy hour is not far off. An *acknowledged* reciprocality in love sanctifies every little freedom: and little freedoms beget greater. And if she call me *ungenerous,* I can call her *cruel*. The sex love to be called cruel. Many a time have I complained of cruelty, even in the act of yielding, because I knew it gratified the fair-one's pride.

Mentioning that he had only hinted at Mr. Belford's lodgings, as an instance to confirm what he had told her, that he knew of none in London fit for her, he says,

I had a mind to alarm her with something furthest from my purpose; for (as much as she disliked my motion,) I intended nothing by it: Mrs. Osgood is too pious a woman, and would have been more *her* friend than *mine*.

I had a view, moreover, to give her an high opinion of her own sagacity. I love, when I dig a pit, to have my prey tumble in with secure feet and open eyes: then a man can look down upon her, with an, *O-ho, charmer! how came you there?*

Monday, April 17.

I have just now received a fresh piece of intelligence from my agent, honest Joseph Leman. Thou knowest the history of poor Miss Betterton of Nottingham. James Harlowe is plotting to revive the resentments of her family against me. The Harlowes took great pains, some time ago, to endeavour to get to the bottom of that story. But now the foolish devils are resolved to do something in it, if they can. My head is working to make this booby squire a plotter, and a clever fellow, in order to turn his plots to my advantage, supposing his sister shall aim to keep me *at arm's length when in town, and to send me from her*. But I will, in proper time, let thee see Joseph's letter, and what I shall answer to it*. To know in time a designed mischief, is, with me, to disappoint it, and to turn it upon the contriver's head.

Joseph is plaguy squeamish again; but I know he only intends by his qualms to swell his merits with me. O Belford! Belford! what a vile corruptible rogue, whether in poor or in rich, is human nature!

* See Letters xliii. xliv. of this volume.

LETTER XXXII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In Answer to Letters* xxiv.—xxx. *inclusive.*]

Tuesday, April 18.

You have a most implacable family. Another visit from your uncle Antony has not only confirmed my mother an enemy to our correspondence, but has almost put her upon treading in their steps.—

But to other subjects:

You plead generously for Mr. Hickman. Perhaps, with regard to him, I may have done, as I have often done in singing—begun a note or key too high; and yet, rather than begin again, proceed, though I strain my voice, or spoil my tune. But this is evident, the man is the more observant for it; and you have taught me, that the spirit which is the humbler for ill usage, will be insolent upon better. So, good and grave Mr. Hickman, keep your distance a little longer, I beseech you. You have erected an altar to me; and I hope you will not refuse to bow to it.

But you ask me, if I would treat Mr. Lovelace, were he to be in Mr. Hickman's place, as I do Mr. Hickman? Why really, my dear, I believe I should not.—I have been very sagely considering this point of behaviour (in general) on both sides in courtship; and I will very candidly tell you the result. I have concluded, that politeness, even to excess, is necessary, on the men's part, to bring us to listen to their first addresses, in order to induce us to bow our necks to a yoke so unequal. But, upon my conscience, I very much doubt whether

a little intermingled insolence is not requisite from them, to keep up that interest, when once it has got footing. Men must not let us see, that we can make fools of them. And I think that *smooth* love; that is to say, a passion without rubs; in other words, a passion without passion; is like a sleepy stream that is hardly seen to give motion to a straw. So that, sometimes to make us fear, and even, for a short space, to *hate* the wretch, is productive of the *contrary* extreme.

If this be so, Lovelace, than whom no man was ever more polite and obsequious at the *beginning*, has hit the very point. For his turbulence *since*, his readiness to offend, and his equal readiness to humble himself (as he is known to be a man of sense, and of courage too), must keep a woman's passion alive; and at last tire her into a non-resistance that shall make her as passive as a tyrant-husband would wish her to be.

I verily think, that the different behaviour of our two heroes to their heroines makes out this doctrine to demonstration. I am so much accustomed, for my own part, to Hickman's whining, creeping, submissive courtship, that I now expect nothing but whine and cringe from him: and am so little moved with his nonsense, that I am frequently forced to go to my harpsichord, to keep me awake, and to silence his humdrum. Whereas Lovelace keeps up the ball with a witness, and all his address and conversation is one continual game at racket.

Your frequent quarrels and reconciliations verify this observation: and I really believe, that, could Hickman have kept my attention alive after the Lovelace manner, only that he had preserved his morals, I should have married the man by this time. But then he must have *set out* accordingly.

For now he can never, never recover himself, that's certain; but must be a dangler to the end of the courtship-chapter; and, what is still worse for him, a passive to the end of his life.

Poor Hickman! perhaps you'll say.

I have been called your echo—poor Hickman! say I.

You wonder, my dear, that Mr. Lovelace showed you not over-night the letters of Lady Betty and his cousin. I don't like his keeping such a material and *relative* circumstance, as I may call it, one moment from you. By his communicating the contents of them to you next day, when you were angry with him, it looks as if he withheld them for *occasional pacifiers;* and if so, must he not have had a forethought that he might give you *cause* for anger? Of all the circumstances that have happened since you have been with him, I think I like this the least: this alone, my dear, small as it might look to an *indifferent* eye, in *mine* warrants all your caution. Yet I think, that Mrs. Greme's letter to her sister Sorlings; his repeated motions for Hannah's attendance; and for that of one of the widow Sorlings's daughters; and, above all, for that of Mrs. Norton, are agreeable counterbalances. Were it not for these circumstances, I should have said a great deal more of the other. Yet what a foolish fellow, to let you know over-night that he *had* such letters!—I can't tell what to make of him.

I am pleased with the contents of these ladies' letters: and the more, as I have caused the family to be again sounded, and find that they are all as desirous as ever of your alliance.

They really are (every one of them) your very great admirers: and, as for Lord M. he is so much pleased with you, and with the confidence, as he calls it, which you have reposed in his nephew,

that he vows he will disinherit him, if he reward it not as he ought. You must take care, that you lose not both families.

I hear Mrs. Norton is enjoined, as she values the favour of the *other* family, not to correspond either with you or with me—Poor creatûres!—But they are your—yet they are not your *relations*, neither, I believe. Had you had any other nurse, I should have concluded you had been changed. I suffer by their low malice—excuse me therefore.

You really hold this man to his good behaviour with more spirit than I thought you mistress of; especially when I judged of you by that meekness which you always contended for, as the proper distinction of the female character; and by the love, which (think as you please) you certainly have for him. You may rather be proud of, than angry at the imputation; since you are the only woman I ever knew, read, or heard of, whose love was so much governed by her prudence. But when once the indifference of the husband takes place of the ardour of the lover, it will be *your* turn: and, if I am not mistaken, this man, who is the only self-admirer I ever knew who was not a coxcomb, will rather, in his day, expect homage than pay it.

Your handsome husbands, my dear, make a wife's heart ache very often: and though you are as fine a person of a woman, at the least, as he is of a man, he will take too much delight in *himself* to think himself more indebted to your favour, than you are to his distinction and preference of you. But no man, take your finer mind, with your very fine person, can deserve you. So you must be contented, should your merit be under-rated; since that *must* be so, marry whom you will. Perhaps you will think I indulge these sort of reflections against your Narcissus's of men, to keep my mo-

ther's choice for me of Hickman in countenance with myself—I don't know but there is something in it; at least, enough to have given birth to the reflection.

I think there can be no objection to your going to London. There, as in the centre, you will be in the way of hearing from every body, and sending to any body. And then you will put all his sincerity to the test, *as to his promised absence*, and such like.

But indeed, my dear, I think you have nothing for it but marriage. You may try (that you may say you *have* tried) what your relations can be brought to: but the moment they refuse your proposals, submit to the yoke, and make the best of it. He will be a savage indeed, if he makes you speak out. Yet, it is my opinion, that you *must* bend a little; for he cannot bear to be thought slightly of.

This was one of his speeches once; I believe designed for me.—'A woman who means one day to favour her lover with her hand, should show the world, for her *own* sake, that she distinguishes him from the common herd.'

Shall I give you another fine sentence of his, and in the true libertine style, as he spoke it, throwing out his challenging hand?—'D—n him, if he would mary the first princess on earth, if he but thought she balanced a minute in her choice of *him*, or of an *emperor*.'

All the world, in short, expect you to have this man. They think, that you left your father's house for this very purpose. The longer the ceremony is delayed, the worse appearance it will have in the world's eye: and it will not be the fault of some of your relations, if a slur be not thrown upon your reputation, while you continue unmarried. Your uncle Antony, in particular, speaks rough and

vile things, grounded upon the morals of his *brother Orson.* But hitherto your admirable character has antidoted the poison; the detractor is despised, and every one's indignation raised against him.

I have written through many interruptions: and you will see the first sheet creased and rumpled, occasioned by putting it into my bosom on my mother's sudden coming upon me. We have had one very pretty debate, I will assure you; but it is not worth while to trouble you with the particulars.—But upon my word—no matter though.—

Your Hannah cannot attend you. The poor girl left her place about a fortnight ago, on account of a rheumatic disorder, which has confined her to her room ever since. She burst into tears, when Kitty carried to her your desire of having her with you; and called herself doubly unhappy, that she could not wait upon a mistress whom she so dearly loved.

Had my mother answered my wishes, I should have been sorry Mr. Lovelace had been the *first* proposer of my Kitty for your attendant, till Hannah should come. To be altogether among strangers, and a stranger to attend you every time you remove, is a very disagreeable thing. But your considerateness and bounty will make you faithful ones wherever you go.

You must take your own way: but, if you suffer any inconvenience, either as to clothes or money, that it is in my power to remedy, I will never forgive you. My mother (if *that* be your objection) need not know any thing of the matter.

We have all our defects: we have often regretted the particular fault, which, though in venerable characters, we must have been blind not to see.

I remember what you once said to me; and the

caution was good: Let us, my Nancy, were your words; let us, who have not the same failings as those we censure, guard against *other* and *greater* in ourselves. Nevertheless, I must needs tell you, that my mother has vexed me a little very lately, by some instances of her jealous narrowness. I will mention one of them, though I did not intend it. She wanted to borrow thirty guineas of me: *only* while she got a note changed. I said I could lend her but eight or ten. Eight or ten would not do: she thought I was much richer. I could have told her, I was much cunninger than to let her know my stock; which on a review, I find ninety-five guineas; and all of them most heartily at your service.

I believe your uncle Tony put her upon this wise project; for she was *out of cash* in an hour after he left her. If he did, you will judge that they intend to distress you. If it will provoke *you* to demand your own in a legal way, I wish they would; since their putting you upon that course will justify the necessity of your leaving them. And as it is not for your credit to own, that you were tricked away contrary to your intention, this would afford a reason for your going off that I should make very good use of. You'll see, that I approve of Lovelace's advice upon this subject. I am not willing to allow the weight to your answer to him on that head, which perhaps *ought* to be allowed*.

You must be the less surprised at the inventions of this man, because of his uncommon talents. Whatever he had turned his head to, he would have excelled in; or been (or done things) extraordinary. He is said to be revengeful: a very bad

* See p. 161.

quality! I believe, indeed, he is a devil in every thing but his foot—This, therefore, is my repeated advice—provoke him not too much against yourself: but unchain him, and let him loose upon your sister's vile Betty, and your brother's Joseph Leman. This is resenting *low:* but I know to whom I write, or else I would go a good deal *higher*, I'll assure you.

Your next, I suppose, will be from London. Pray direct it, and your future letters, till further notice, to Mr. Hickman, at his own house. He is entirely devoted to you. Don't take so heavily my mother's partiality and prejudices. I hope I am past a baby.

Heaven preserve you, and make you as happy as I think you deserve to be, prays

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXXIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Wedn. morn. April 19.

I AM glad, my dear friend, that you approve of my removal to London.

The disagreement between your mother and you gives me inexpressible affliction. I hope I think you both more unhappy than you are. But I beseech you let me know the particulars of the debate you call *a very pretty* one. I am well acquainted with your dialect. When I am informed of the whole, let your mother have been ever so severe upon me, I shall be easier a great deal.—Faulty people should rather deplore the occasion they have given for anger than resent it.

If I am to be obliged to any body in England for money, it shall be to you. Your mother need not know of your kindness to me, you say—but she *must* know it, if it be done, and if she challenge my beloved friend upon it; for would you either falsify or prevaricate?—I wish your mother could be made easy on this head.—Forgive me, my dear. —But I know—yet once she had a better opinion of me.—O my inconsiderate rashness!—Excuse me once more, I pray you.—Pride, when it is *native*, will show itself sometimes in the midst of mortifications—but my spirit is down already.

* * *

I AM unhappy that I cannot have my worthy Hannah. I am as sorry for the poor creature's illness as for my own disappointment by it. Come, my dear Miss Howe, since you press me to be beholden to you; and would think me proud if I absolutely refused your favour; pray be so good as to send her two guineas in my name.

If I have nothing for it, as you say, but matrimony, it yields a little comfort, that his relations do not despise *the fugitive*, as persons of their rank and quality-pride might be supposed to do, for having *been* a fugitive.

But O my cruel, thrice cruel uncle! to suppose —but my heart checks my pen, and will not let it proceed, on an intimation so extremely shocking as that which he supposes!—Yet if thus they have been persuaded, no wonder if they are irreconcileable.

This is all my hard-hearted brother's doings!— his surmisings!—God forgive him—prays his injured sister!

LETTER XXXIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday, April 20.

Mr. Lovelace's servant is already returned with an answer from his friend Mr. Doleman, who has taken pains in his inquiries, and is very particular. Mr. Lovelace brought me the letter as soon as he had read it: and as he now knows that I acquaint you with every thing that offers, I desired him to let me send it to you for your perusal. Be pleased to return it by the first opportunity. You will see by it, that his friends in town have a notion that we are actually married.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Tuesday night, April 18.

I am extremely rejoiced to hear, that we shall so soon have you in town, after so long an absence. You will be the more welcome still, if what report says, be true; which is, that you are *actually married* to the fair lady upon whom we have heard you make such encomiums. Mrs. Doleman, and my sister, both wish you joy if you are; and joy upon your near prospect if you are not.

I have been in town for this week past, to get help, if I could, from my paralytic complaints; and am in a course for them. Which, nevertheless, did not prevent me from making the desired inquiries. This is the result.

You may have a first floor, well furnished, at a mercer's in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, with conveniences for servants: and these either by the quarter or month. The terms according to the conveniences required.

Mrs. Doleman has seen lodgings in Norfolk Street and others in Cecil Street; but though the prospects to the Thames and Surry hills look inviting from both these streets, yet I suppose they are too near the city.

The owner of those in Norfolk Street would have half the house go together. It would be too much for your description therefore: and I suppose, that when you think fit to *declare your marriage*, you will hardly be in lodgings.

Those in Cecil Street are neat and convenient. The owner is a widow of good character; but she insists that you take them for a twelvemonth certain.

You may have good accommodations in Dover Street, at a widow's, the relict of an officer in the guards, who dying soon after he had purchased his commission (to which he had a good title by service, and which cost him most part of what he had) she *was obliged to let lodgings.*

This may possibly be an objection. But she is very careful, she says, that she takes no lodgers, but of *figure* and *reputation*. She rents two good houses, distant from each other, only joined by a *large handsome passage*. The *inner-house* is the genteelest, and very elegantly furnished; but you may have the use of a very handsome parlour in the *outer-house*, if you choose to look into the street.

A little garden belongs to the inner house, in which the old gentlewoman has displayed a true female fancy; having crammed it with vases, flower-pots, and figures, without number.

As these lodgings seemed to me the most likely to please you, I was more particular in my inquiries about them. The apartments she has to let are in the inner-house: they are a dining-room, two neat parlours, a withdrawing room, two or three

handsome bed-chambers; one with a pretty light closet in it, which looks into the little garden, all furnished in taste.

A *dignified clergyman*, his *wife*, and *maiden-daughter*, were the last who lived in them. They have but lately quitted them, on his being presented to a considerable church preferment in Ireland. The gentlewoman says that he took the lodgings but for *three months* certain; but liked them and *her usage* so well, that he continued in them *two years;* and left them with regret, though on so good an account. She bragged, that this was the way of all the lodgers she ever had, who staid with her *four times as long as they at first intended.*

I had some knowledge of the colonel, who was always looked upon as a man of honour. His relict I never saw before. I think she has a *masculine air*, and is a *little forbidding at first:* but when I saw her behaviour to two agreeable *maiden gentlewomen*, her husband's nieces, whom, for *that* reason, she calls *doubly* hers, and heard their praises of *her*, I could impute her very bulk to good-humour; since we seldom see your sour peevish people plump. She lives *reputably*, and is, as I find, *aforehand* in the world.

If these, or any other of the lodgings I have mentioned, be not altogether to your lady's mind, she may continue in them *the less while*, and *choose others for herself.*

The widow consents that you shall take them for a *month only*, and *what* of them you please. The terms, she says, she will not fall out upon, when she knows what your lady expects, and what *her* servants are to do, or *yours* will undertake; for she observed that servants are generally worse to deal with than their masters or mistresses.

The lady may board or not, as she pleases.

As we *suppose you married,* but that you have reason, from family differences, to keep it private for the present, I thought it not amiss to hint as much to the widow (but as *uncertainty,* however); and asked her, if she could, in that case, accommodate you and your servants, as well as the lady and her's? She said, she could; and wished, by all means, it were to be so; since the circumstance of a person's *being single,* if not as well recommended as this lady, was *one of her usual exceptions.*

If none of these lodgings please, you need not doubt very handsome ones in or near Hanover Square, Soho Square, Golden Square, or in some of the new streets about Grosvenor Square. And Mrs. Doleman, her sister, and myself, most cordially join to offer to your good lady the best accommodations we can make for her at Uxbridge (and also for you, if you are the happy man we wish you to be) till she fits herself more to her mind.

Let me add, that the lodgings at the mercer's, those in Cecil Street, those at the widow's in Dover Street, any of them, may be entered upon at a day's warning. I am, my dear sir,

Your sincere and affectionate friend and servant,

THO. DOLEMAN.

You will easily guess, my dear, when you have read the letter, *which* lodgings I made choice of. But first to try him, (as in so material a point I thought I could not be too circumspect) I seemed to prefer those in Norfolk Street, for the very reason the writer gives why he thought I would *not;* that is to say, for its neighbourhood to a city so well governed as London is said to be. Nor should I have disliked a lodging in the heart of it, having heard but indifferent accounts of the liberties sometimes taken at the other end of the town.—

Then seeming to incline to the lodgings in Cecil Street—then to the mercer's. But he made no visible preference: and when I asked his opinion of the widow-gentlewoman's, he said, he thought those the most to my taste and convenience: but as he hoped that I would think lodgings necessary but for a very little while, he knew not which to give his vote for.

I then fixed upon the widow's; and he has written accordingly to Mr. Doleman, making my compliments to his lady and sister, for their kind offer.

I am to have the dining-room, the bed-chamber with the light closet, (of which, if I stay any time at the widow's, I shall make great use) and a servant's room; and we propose to set out on Saturday morning. As for a maid servant, poor Hannah's illness is a great disappointment to me: but, as he observes, I can make the widow satisfaction for one of her's, till I can get a servant to my mind. And you know, I want not much attendance.

* * *

Mr. Lovelace has just now, of his own accord, given me five guineas for poor Hannah. I send them inclosed. Be so good as to cause them to be conveyed to her; and to let her know from whom they came.

He has obliged me much by this little mark of his considerateness. Indeed I have had the better opinion of him ever since he proposed her return to me.

* * *

I have just now *another* instance of his considerateness. He came to me, and said, that, on second thoughts, he could not bear that I should go up to town without some attendant, were it but for the look of the thing, to the London widow and her

nieces, who, according to his friend's account, *lived so genteely*; and especially *as I required him to leave me soon after I arrived there*, and so would be left alone among strangers. He therefore thought, that I might engage Mrs. Sorlings to lend me one of her two maids, or let one of her daughters go up with me, and stay till I were provided. And if the latter, the young gentlewoman, no doubt, would be glad of so good an opportunity to see the curiosities of the town, and would be a proper attendant on the same occasions.

I told him, as I had done before, that the two young gentlewomen were so equally useful in their way, and servants in a busy farm were so little to be spared, that I should be loth to take them off their laudable employments. Nor should I think much of diversions for one while; and so the less want an attendant out of doors.

And now, my dear, lest any thing should happen, in so variable a situation as mine, to over-cloud my prospects (which at present are more promising than ever yet they have been since I quitted Harlowe Place), I will snatch the opportunity to subscribe myself

Your not unhoping, and
ever-obliged friend and servant,
CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Thursday, April 20.

He begins with communicating to him the letter he wrote to Mr. Doleman, *to procure suitable lodgings in town, and which he sent away by the lady's appro-*

bation: and then gives him a copy of the answer to it (See p. 195): upon which he thus expresses himself:

THOU knowest the widow; thou knowest her nieces; thou knowest the lodgings; and didst thou ever read a letter more artfully couched, than this of Tom Doleman? Every possible objection anticipated! Every accident provided against! Every tittle of it plot-proof!

Who could forbear smiling, to see my charmer, like a farcical dean and chapter, choose what was before chosen for her; and sagaciously (as *they* go in form to prayers, that heaven would direct their choice) pondering upon the different proposals, as if she would make me believe, she had a mind for *some other?* The dear sly rogue looking upon me, too, with a view to discover some emotion in me. Emotions I had; but I can tell her, that they lay deeper than her eye could reach, though it had been a sunbeam.

No confidence in me, fair one! None at all, 'tis plain. Thou wilt not, if I were inclined to change my views, encourage me by a generous reliance on my honour!—And shall it be said, that I, a master of arts in love, shall be over matched by so unpractised a novice?

But to see the charmer so far satisfied with my contrivance, as to borrow my friend's letter, in order to satisfy Miss Howe likewise!—

Silly little rogues! to walk out into by-paths on the strength of their own judgment!—When nothing but *experience* can enable them to disappoint us, and teach them grandmother-wisdom! When they *have* it indeed, then may they sit down, like so many Cassandra's, and preach caution to others; who will as little mind *them,* as they did *their* in-

structresses, whenever a fine handsome confident young fellow, such a one as thou knowest who, comes a-cross them.

But, Belford, didst thou not mind that sly rogue Doleman's naming *Dover Street* for the widow's place of abode?—What dost think could be meant by that?—'Tis impossible thou shouldst guess. So, not to puzzle thee about it, suppose the *widow Sinclair's in Dover Street* should be inquired after by some officious person, in order to come at characters [Miss Howe is as *sly* as the devil, and as busy to the full]; and neither such a name, nor such a house, can be found in that street, nor a house to answer the description; then will not the keenest hunter in England be at a fault?

But how wilt thou do, methinks thou askest, to hinder the lady from resenting the fallacy, and mistrusting thee the more on that account, when she finds it out to be in another street?

Pho! never mind that: either I shall have a way for it; or we shall thoroughly understand one another by that time; or if we don't, she'll know enough of me, not to wonder at *such* a peccadilla.

But how wilt thou hinder the lady from apprizing her friend of the real name?

She must first know it herself, monkey, must she not?

Well, but, how wilt thou do to hinder her from knowing the street, and her friend from directing letters thither; which will be the same thing as if the name were known?

Let me alone for that too.

If thou further objectest, that Tom Doleman is too great a dunce to write such a letter in answer to mine.—Canst thou not imagine, that, in order to save honest Tom all this trouble, I who know the

town so well, could send him a copy of what he should write, and leave him nothing to do but transcribe?

What now sayest thou to *me*, Belford?

And suppose I had designed this task of inquiry for thee; and suppose the lady excepted against thee for no other reason in the world, but because of my value for thee? What sayest thou to the *lady*, Jack?

This it is to have leisure upon my hands!—What a matchless plotter thy friend!—Stand by, and let me swell!—I am already as big as an elephant; and ten times wiser!—Mightier too by far! Have I not reason to snuff the moon with my proboscis?—Lord help thee for a poor, for a very poor creature!—Wonder not, that I despise thee heartily; since the man who is disposed immoderately to exalt himself, cannot do it but by despising every body else in proportion.

I shall make good use of the *Dolemanic* hint of *being married.* But I will not tell thee all at once. Nor, indeed, have I thoroughly digested that part of my plot. When a general must regulate his motions by those of a watchful adversary, how can he say beforehand what he will, or what he will not, do?

Widow SINCLAIR, didst thou not say, Lovelace?—

Ay, SINCLAIR, Jack!—Remember the name! SINCLAIR, I repeat. She *has* no other. And her features being broad, and full-blown, I will suppose her to be of Highland extraction; as her husband the colonel [*mind that too*] was a Scot, as brave as honest.

I never forgot the *minutiæ* in my contrivances. In all matters that admit of doubt, the *minutiæ* closely attended to, and provided for, are of more service than a thousand oaths, vows, and protestations made to supply the neglect of them, espe-

cially when jealousy has made its way in the working mind.

Thou wouldst wonder if thou knewest one half of my *providences*. To give thee but one—I have already been so good as to send up a list of books to be procured for the lady's closet, mostly at *second hand*. And thou knowest, that the women there are all well read. But I will not anticipate—besides, it looks as if I were afraid of leaving any thing to my old friend Chance: which has many a time been an excellent second to me; and ought not to be affronted or despised; especially by one, who has the art of making unpromising incidents turn out in his favour.

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Wednesday, April 19.

I have a piece of intelligence to give you, which concerns you much to know.

Your brother having been assured that you are not married, has taken a resolution to find you out, waylay you, and carry you off. A friend of his, a captain of a ship, undertakes to get you on ship-board; and to sail away with you, either to Hull or Leith, in the way to one of your brother's houses.

They are very wicked: for in spite of your virtue they conclude you to be *ruined*. But if they can be assured when they have you, that you are not, they will secure you till they can bring you out Mrs. Solmes. Meantime, in order to give Mr. Lovelace full employment, they talk of a prosecution which will be set up against him, for some

crime they have got a notion of, which they think, if it do not cost him his life, will make him fly his country.

This is very early news. Miss Bell told it in confidence, and with mighty triumph over Lovelace, to Miss Lloyd: who is at present her favourite; though as much your admirer as ever. Miss Lloyd, being very apprehensive of the mischief which might follow such an attempt, told it to me, with leave to apprise you privately of it—and yet neither she nor I would be sorry perhaps, if Lovelace were to be fairly hanged—that is to say, if *you*, my dear, had no objection to it. But we cannot bear that such an admirable creature should be made the tennis-ball of two violent spirits—much less, that you should be seized, and exposed to the brutal treatment of wretches who have no bowels.

If you can engage Mr. Lovelace to keep his temper upon it, I think you should acquaint him with it, but not to mention Miss Lloyd. Perhaps his wicked agent may come at the intelligence, and reveal it to him. But I leave it to your own discretion to do as you think fit in it. All my concern is, that this daring and foolish project, if carried on, will be a means of throwing you more into his power than ever. But as it will convince you, that there can be no hope of a reconciliation, I wish you were actually married, let the cause for the prosecution hinted at be what it will, short of murder or a rape.

Your Hannah was very thankful for your kind present. She heaped a thousand blessings upon you for it. She has Mr. Lovelace's too by this time.

I am pleased with Mr. Hickman, I can tell you:—for he has sent her two guineas by the person

who carries Mr. Lovelace's five, as from an unknown hand: nor am I, or you, to know it. But he does a great many things of this sort; and is as silent as the night in his charities; for nobody knows of them, till the gratitude of the benefited will not let them be concealed. He is now and then my almoner, and I believe always adds to my little benefactions.

But his time is not come to be praised to his face for these things; nor does he seem to want that encouragement.

The man has certainly a good mind. Nor can we expect in one man every good quality. But he is really a silly fellow, my dear, to trouble his head about me, when he sees how much I despise his whole sex; and must of course make a common man look like a fool, were he not to make *himself* look like one, by wishing to pitch his tent so oddly. Our likings and dislikings, as I have often thought, are seldom governed by prudence, or with a view to happiness. The eye, my dear, the wicked eye—has such a strict alliance with the heart—and both have such enmity to the judgment!—What an unequal union, the mind and body! All the senses, like the family at Harlowe Place, in a confederacy against that which would animate, and give honour to the whole, were it allowed its proper precedence,

Permit me, I beseech you, before you go to London, to send you forty-eight guineas. I mention that sum to oblige you, because, by accepting back the two to Hannah, I will hold you indebted to me fifty.—Surely *this* will induce you! You know that I cannot want the money. I told you, that I have near double that sum; and that the half of it is more than my mother knows I am mistress of. You are afraid, that my mother will question me

on this subject; and then you think I must own the truth—but little as I love equivocation, and little as you would allow of it in your Anna Howe, it is hard, if I cannot (were I to be put to it ever so closely) find something to say, that would bring me off, and not impeach my veracity. With so little money as you have, what can you do at such a place as London?—You don't know what occasion you may have for messengers, intelligence, and such-like. If you don't oblige me, I shall not think your spirit so much down as you say it is, and as, in this one particular, I think it ought to be.

As to the state of things between my mother and me, you know enough of her temper, not to need to be told, that she never espouses or resents with indifference. Yet will she not remember, that I am *her* daughter. No, truly, I am all my *papa's girl*.

She was very sensible, surely, of the violence of my poor father's temper, that she can so long remember *that*, when acts of tenderness and affection seem quite forgotten. Some daughters would be tempted to think, that control sat very heavy upon a mother who can endeavour to exert the power she has over a child, and regret, for years after death, that she had not the same over a husband.

If this manner of expression becomes not me, of my mother, the fault will be somewhat extenuated by the love I always bore to my father, and by the reverence I shall ever pay to his memory: for he was a fond father, and perhaps would have been as tender a husband, had not my mother and he been too much of a temper to agree.

The misfortune was, in short, that, when *one* was out of humour, the *other* would be so too: yet neither of their tempers *comparatively* bad. Notwith-

standing all which, I did not imagine, girl as I was in my father's lifetime, that my mother's part of the yoke sat so heavy upon her neck as she gives me room to think it did whenever she is pleased to disclaim *her* part of me.

Both parents, as I have often thought, should be very careful, if they would secure to themselves the undivided love of their children, that, of all things, they should avoid such *durable* contentions with each other, as should distress their children in choosing their party, when they would be glad to reverence *both* as they ought.

But here is the thing: there is not a better manager of her affairs in the sex, than my mother; and I believe a *notable* wife is more impatient of control, than an *indolent* one. An indolent one, perhaps, thinks she has something to *compound* for; while women of the other character, I suppose, know too well their own significance to think highly of that of any body else. All must be their own way. In one word, because they are *useful*, they will be *more* than useful.

I do assure you, my dear, were I a man, and a man who loved my quiet, I would not have one of these managing wives on any consideration. I would make it a matter of serious inquiry beforehand, whether my mistress's qualifications, if I heard she was notable, were *masculine* or *feminine* ones. If indeed I were an indolent supine mortal, who might be in danger of becoming the property of my steward, I would then perhaps choose to marry for the qualifications of a steward.

But, setting my mother out of the question, because she *is* my mother, have I not seen how Lady Hartley pranks up herself above all her sex, because she knows how to manage affairs that do not *belong* to her sex to manage?—Affairs that do no

credit to her as a woman to understand; *practically*, I mean; for the *theory* of them may not be amiss to be known.

Indeed, my dear, I do not think a *man-woman* a pretty character at all: and, as I said, were I a *man*, I would sooner choose a dove, though it were fit for nothing, but as the play says, to go tame about house, and breed, than a wife that is setting at work (my insignificant self *present* perhaps) every busy hour my never-resting servants, those of the stud not excepted; and who, with a besom in her hand, as I may say, would be continually filling me with apprehensions, that she wanted to sweep me out of my own house as useless lumber.

Were indeed the mistress of a family (like the wonderful young lady I so *much* and so *justly* admire) to know how to confine herself within her own respectable rounds of the needle, the pen, the housekeeper's bills, the dairy for her amusement; to see the poor fed from superfluities that would otherwise be wasted; and exert herself in all the really useful branches of domestic management; then would she move in her proper sphere; then would she render herself *amiably* useful, and *respectably* necessary; then would she become the *mistress*-wheel of the family [whatever you think of your Anna Howe, I would not have her be the *master*-wheel]; and every body would love her; as every body did you, before your insolent brother came back, flushed with his unmerited acquirements, and turned all things topsy-turvy.

If you *will* be informed of the particulars of our contention, after you have known in general, that *your* unhappy affair was the subject; why then, I think I must tell you.

Yet how shall I?—I feel my cheek glow with mingled shame and indignation—know then, my

dear,—that I have been—as I may say—that I have been *beaten*—indeed 'tis true. My mother thought fit to slap my hands to get from me a sheet of a letter she caught me writing to you; which I tore, because she should not read it, and burnt it before her face.

I know this will trouble you: so spare yourself the pains to tell me it does.

Mr. Hickman came in presently after. I would not see him. I am either too much a woman to be beat, or too much a child to have an humble servant.—So I told my mother. What can one oppose but sullens, when it would be unpardonable so much as to *think* of lifting up a finger?

In the Harlowe-style, she *will* be obeyed, she says: and even Mr. Hickman shall be forbid the house, if he contributes to the carrying on of a correspondence which she will not suffer to be continued.

Poor man! He stands a whimsical chance between us. But he knows he is *sure* of my mother; but not of me. 'Tis easy then for him to choose his party, were it not his inclination to serve you, as it surely *is*. And this makes him a merit with me, which otherwise he would not have had; notwithstanding the good qualities which I have just now acknowledged in his favour. For, my dear, let my faults in other respects be what they may, I will pretend to say, that I have in my own mind those qualities which I praised him for. And if we are to come together, I could for that reason better dispense with them in him.—So if a husband, who has a bountiful-tempered wife, is not a niggard, nor seeks to restrain her, but has an opinion of all she does, that is enough for him: as, on the contrary, if a bountiful-tempered husband has a frugal wife, it is best for both. For one

to give, and the other to give, except they have prudence, and are at so good an understanding with each other, as to compare notes, they may perhaps put it out of their power to be *just*. Good frugal doctrine, my dear! But this way of putting it, is middling the matter between what I have learnt of my mother's *over*-prudent and your *enlarged* notions.—But from doctrine to fact—

I shut myself up all that day; and what little I did eat, eat alone. But at night she sent up Kitty, with a command, upon my obedience, to attend her at supper.

I went down: but most gloriously in the sullens. YES, and NO, were great words with me, to every thing she asked, for a good while.

That behaviour, she told me, should not do for her.

Beating should not with me, I said.

My bold resistance, she told me, had provoked her to slap my hand: and she was sorry to have been so provoked. But again insisted, that I would either give up my correspondence absolutely, or let her see all that passed in it.

I must not do either, I told her. It was unsuitable both to my inclination and to my honour, at the instigation of base minds, to give up a friend in distress.

She rung all the maternal changes upon the words duty, obedience, filial obligation, and so forth.

I told her, that a duty too rigorously and unreasonably exacted had been your ruin, if you *were* ruined.

If I were of age to be married, I hope she would think me capable of *making*, or at least of *keeping*, my own friendships; such a one especially as this,

with a *woman too,* and one whose friendship she herself, till this distressful point of time, had thought the most useful and edifying that I had ever contracted.

The greater the merit, the worse the action: the finer the talents, the more dangerous the example.

There were other duties, I said, besides the filial one; and I hoped I need not give up a suffering friend, especially at the instigation of those by whom she suffered. I told her, that it was very hard to annex such a condition as that to my duty; when I was persuaded, that both duties might be performed, without derogating from either: that an unreasonable command (she must excuse me; I must say it, though I were slapped again) was a degree of tyranny: and I could not have expected, that at these years I should be allowed no will, no choice of my own! where a woman only was concerned, and the devilish sex not in the question.

What turned most in favour of her argument was, that I desired to be excused from letting her read all that passes between us. She insisted much upon this: and since, she said, you were in the hands of the most intriguing man in the world; and a man, who had made a jest of her favourite Hickman, as she has been told; she knows not what consequences, unthought-of by you or me, may flow from such a correspondence.

So you see, my dear, that I fare the worse on Mr. Hickman's account! My mother *might* see all that passes between us, did I not know, that it would cramp your spirit, and restrain the freedom of your pen, as it would also the freedom of mine: and were she not moreover so firmly attached to the contrary side, that inferences, consequences, strained deductions, censures, and constructions the

most partial, would for ever be hawled in to tease me, and would perpetually subject us to the necessity of debating and canvassing.

Besides, I don't choose that she should know how much this artful wretch has outwitted, as I may call it, a person so much his superior in all the nobler qualities of the human mind.

The generosity of your heart, and the greatness of your soul, full well I know; but do not offer to dissuade me from this correspondence.

Mr. Hickman, immediately on the contention above, offered his service; and I accepted of it, as you will see by my last. He thinks, though he has all honour for my mother, that she is unkind to us both. He was pleased to tell me (with an air, as I thought) that he not only *approved* of our correspondence, but admired the steadiness of my friendship; and having no opinion of your *man*, but a great one of *me*, thinks that my advice or intelligence from time to time may be of use to you; and on this presumption said, that it would be a thousand pities that you should suffer for want of either.

Mr. Hickman pleased me in the main of his speech; and it is well the general tenor of it was agreeable; otherwise I can tell him, I should have reckoned with him for his word *approve;* for it is a style I have not yet permitted him to talk to me in. And you see, my dear, what these men are—no sooner do they find that you have favoured them with the power of doing you an agreeable service, but they take upon them to *approve*, forsooth, of your actions! By which is implied a right to *disapprove*, if they think fit.

I have told my mother how much you wish to be reconciled to your relations, and how independent you are upon Lovelace.

Mark the end of the latter assertion, she says. And as to reconciliation, she knows that nothing will do (and will have it, that nothing *ought* to do) but your returning back, without presuming to condition with them. And this if you do, she says, will best show your independence on Lovelace.

You see, my dear, what your duty is, in my mother's opinion.

I suppose your next directed to Mr. Hickman, at his own house, will be from London.

Heaven preserve you in honour and safety, is my prayer.

What you do for change of clothes, I cannot imagine.

It is amazing to me what your relations can mean by distressing you as they seem resolved to do. I see they will throw you into his arms, whether you will or not.

I send this by Robert, for dispatch sake; and can only repeat the hitherto rejected offer of my best services. Adieu, my dearest friend. Believe me ever

Your affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXXVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday, April 20.

I SHOULD think myself utterly unworthy of your friendship did my own concerns, heavy as they are, so engross me, that I could not find leisure for a few lines to declare to my beloved friend my sincere disapprobation of her conduct, in an instance

where she is so *generously* faulty, that the consciousness of that very generosity may hide from her the fault, which I, more than any other, have reason to deplore, as being the unhappy occasion of it.

You know, you say, that your account of the contentions between your mother and you will trouble me; and so you bid me spare myself the pains to tell you that they do.

You did not use, my dear, to forbid me thus *beforehand*. You were wont to say, you loved me the better for my expostulations with you on that acknowledged warmth and quickness of your temper which your own good sense taught you to be apprehensive of. What though I have so miserably fallen, and am unhappy? If ever I had any judgment worth regarding, it is now as much worth as ever, because I can give it as freely against myself as against any body else. And shall I not, when there seems to be an infection in my fault, and that it leads you likewise to resolve to carry on a correspondence against prohibition, expostulate with you upon it; when whatever consequences flow from your disobedience, they but widen my error, which is as the evil root, from which such sad branches spring?

The mind that can glory in being capable of so noble, so firm, so unshaken a friendship, as that of my dear Miss Howe; a friendship which no casualty or distress can lessen, but which increases with the misfortunes of its friend—such a mind must be above taking amiss the well-meant admonitions of that distinguished friend. I will not therefore apologize for my freedom on this subject: and the less need I, when that freedom is the result of an affection, in the very instance, so *abso-*

lutely disinterested, that it tends to deprive myself of the only comfort left me.

Your acknowledged sullens; your tearing from your mother's hands the letter she thought she had a right to see; and burning it, as you own, before her face; your refusal to see the man, who is so willing to obey you for the sake of your unhappy friend, and this purely to vex your mother; can you think, my dear, upon this brief recapitulation of hardly one half of the faulty particulars you give, that these faults are excusable in one who so well knows her duty?

Your mother had a good opinion of me once: is not that a reason why she should be more regarded now, when I have, *as she believes*, so deservedly forfeited it? A prejudice in favour is as hard to be totally overcome, as a prejudice in disfavour. In what a strong light, then, must that error appear to her, that should so totally turn her heart against me, herself not a principal in the case?

There are other duties, you say, besides the filial duty: but that, my dear, must be a duty prior to all other duties; a duty anterior, as I may say, to your very birth: and what duty ought not to give way to that, when they come in competition?

You are persuaded, that the duty to your friend, and the filial duty, may be performed without derogating from either. Your *mother* thinks otherwise. What is the conclusion to be drawn from these premises?

When your mother sees, how much *I* suffer in my reputation from the step I have taken, from whom she and all the world expected better things, how much reason has she to be watchful over you! One evil draws on another after it; and how knows she, or any body, where it may stop?

Does not the person who will vindicate, or seek to extenuate, a faulty step in another, [in this light must your mother look upon the matter in question between her and you] give an indication either of a culpable will, or a weak judgment; and may not she apprehend, that the censorious will think, that such a one might probably have equally failed under the same *inducements* and *provocations*, to *use your own words*, as applied to me in a former letter?

Can there be a stronger instance in human life, than mine has so early furnished within a few months past (not to mention the uncommon provocations to it, which I have met with) of the necessity of the continuance of a watchful parent's care over a daughter; let that daughter have obtained ever so great a reputation for her prudence?

Is not the space from sixteen to twenty-one, that which requires this care, more than at any time of a young woman's life? For in that period, do we not generally attract the eyes of the other sex, and become the subject of their addresses, and not seldom of their attempts? And is not that the period in which our conduct or misconduct gives us a reputation or disreputation, that almost inseparably accompanies us throughout our whole future lives?

Are we not likewise then most in danger from *ourselves*, because of the distinction with which we are apt to behold particulars of that sex?

And when our dangers multiply, both from *within* and *without*, do not our parents know, that their vigilance ought to be doubled? And shall that necessary increase of care sit uneasy upon us, because we are grown up to stature and womanhood?

Will you tell me, if so, what is the precise stature and age, at which a good child shall conclude herself absolved from the duty she owes to a parent?

—And at which a parent, after the example of the dams of the brute creation, is to lay aside all care and tenderness for her offspring?

Is it so hard for you, my dear, to be treated like a child? And can you not think it as hard for a good parent to imagine herself under the unhappy *necessity* of so treating her woman-grown daughter?

Do you think, if your mother had been *you*, and you your *mother*, and *your* daughter had struggled with you, as you did with her, that you would not have been as apt as your mother was to have slapped your daughter's hands, to have made her quit her hold, and give up the prohibited letter?

Your mother told you with great truth, that you *provoked* her to this harshness; and it was a great condescension in her (and not taken notice of by you as it deserved) to say that she was *sorry for it.*

At *every* age on this side matrimony (for then we come under another sort of protection, though that is far from abrogating the filial duty) it will be found, that the wings of our parents are our most necessary and most effectual safeguard from the vultures, the hawks, the kites, and other villainous birds of prey, that hover over us with a view to seize and destroy us the first time we are caught wandering out of the eye or care of our watchful and natural guardians and protectors.

Hard as you may suppose it, to be denied the *continuance* of a correspondence once so much approved, even by the venerable denier; yet, if your mother think my fault to be of such a nature, as that a correspondence with me will cast a shade upon your reputation; all my own friends having given me up—that hardship is to be submitted to. And must it not make her the more strenuous to support her own opinion when she sees the first fruits of this tenaciousness on your side, is to be

gloriously in the sullens, as you call it; and in a disobedient opposition?

I know that you have an humorous meaning in that expression, and that this turn, in most cases, gives a delightful poignancy both to your conversation and correspondence; but indeed, my dear, *this* case will not bear humour.

Will you give me leave to add to this tedious expostulation, that I by no means approve of some of the things you write, in relation to the manner in which your father and mother lived—at times lived—only *at times*, I dare say; though perhaps too often.

Your mother is answerable to *any body*, rather than to her *child*, for whatever was wrong in her conduct, if any thing *was* wrong, towards Mr. Howe: a gentleman, of whose memory I will only say, that it *ought* to be revered by you—but yet, should you not examine yourself, whether your displeasure at your mother had no part in your revived reverence for your father, at the time you wrote?

No one is perfect: and although your mother may not be so right to remember disagreeablenesses against the departed, yet should you not want to be reminded on *whose* account, and on *what* occasion, she remembered them. You cannot judge, nor ought you to *attempt* to judge, of what might have passed between both, to embitter and keep awake disagreeable remembrances in the survivor.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

In Continuation.

But this subject must not be pursued. Another might, with more pleasure (though not with more approbation) upon one of your lively excursions. It is upon the high airs you give yourself upon the word *approve*.

How comes it about, I wonder, that a young lady so noted for a predominating generosity, should not be uniformly generous? That your generosity should fail in an instance, where policy, prudence, gratitude, would not permit it to fail? Mr. Hickman (as you confess) has indeed a worthy mind. If I had not long ago known that, he would never have found an advocate in me for my Anna Howe's favour to him. Often and often have I been concerned, when I was your happy guest, to see him, after a conversation in which he had well supported his part in your absence, sink at once into silence the moment you came into company.

I have told you of this before: and I believe I hinted to you once, that the superciliousness you put on *only* to him, was capable of a construction, which at the time would have very little gratified your pride to have had made; since it would have been as much in *his* favour as in *your* disfavour.

Mr. Hickman, my dear, is a *modest* man. I never see a modest man, but I am sure (if he has not wanted opportunities) that he has a treasure in his mind, which requires nothing but the *key of encouragement* to unlock it, to make him shine—while a confident man, who, to *be* confident, must think as meanly of his company as highly of himself, enters

with magisterial airs upon any subject; and, depending upon his assurance to bring himself off when found out, talks of more than he is master of.

But a *modest* man!—O, my dear, shall not a modest woman distinguish and wish to consort with a modest man?—A man, *before* whom, and *to* whom, she may open her lips secure of his good opinion of all she says, and of his just and polite regard for her judgment? and who must therefore inspire her with an agreeable self-confidence.

What a lot have I drawn!—We are all indeed apt to turn teachers—but, surely, I am better enabled to talk, to write, upon these subjects, than ever I was. But I will banish *myself*, if possible, from an address which, when I began to write, I was determined to confine wholly to your own particular.

My dearest, dearest friend, how ready are you to tell us what *others* should do, and even what a *mother* should have done! But indeed you once, I remember, advanced, that, as different attainments required different talents to master them, so in the writing way, a person might not be a bad critic upon the works of others, although he might himself be unable to write with excellence. But will you permit me to account for all this readiness of finding fault, by placing it to human nature, which being sensible of the defects of human nature (that is to say, of its *own* defects) loves to be *correcting?* But in exercising that talent, chooses rather to turn its eye *outward* than *inward?* In other words, to employ itself rather in the *out-door* search than in the *in-door* examination.

And here give me leave to add (and yet it is with tender reluctance) that although you say very pretty things of notable wives; and although I join with you in opinion, that husbands may have as many inconveniences to encounter *with* as conve-

niences to boast *of*, from women of that character; yet Lady Hartley perhaps would have had milder treatment from your pen, had it not been dipped in gall with a mother in your eye.

As to the money you so generously and repeatedly offer, don't be angry with me, if I again say, that I am very desirous that you should be able to aver, without the least qualifying or reserve, that nothing of that sort has passed between us. I know your mother's strong way of putting the *question she is intent upon* having answered. But yet I promise that I will be obliged to nobody but you when I have occasion.

LETTER XXXIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

In Continuation.

And now, my dear, a few words as to the prohibition laid upon you; a subject that I have frequently touched upon, but cursorily, because I was afraid to trust myself with it, knowing that my judgment, if I did, would condemn my practice.

You command me not to attempt to dissuade you from this correspondence; and you tell me how kindly Mr. Hickman approves of it; and how obliging he is to me, to permit it to be carried on under cover to him—but this does not quite satisfy me.

I am a very bad casuist; and the pleasure I take in writing to you, who are the only one to whom I can disburden my mind, may make me, as I have hinted, very partial to my own wishes:—else, if it were not an artful evasion beneath an open and frank heart to wish to be complied with, I would be

glad methinks to be permitted still to write to you; and only to have such *occasional returns* by Mr. Hickman's pen, as well as cover, as might set me right when I am wrong; confirm me when right; and guide me where I doubt. This would enable me to proceed in the difficult path before me with more assuredness. For whatever I suffer from the censures of others, if I can preserve your good opinion, I shall not be altogether unhappy, let what will befal me.

And indeed, my dear, I know not how to *forbear* writing. I have now no other employment or diversion. And I must write on, although I were not to send it to any body. You have often heard me own the advantages I have found from writing down every thing of moment that befals me; and of all I *think*, and of all I *do*, that may be of future use to me; for, besides that this helps to form one to a style, and opens and expands the ductile mind, every one will find, that many a good thought evaporates in thinking; many a good resolution goes off, driven out of memory perhaps by some other not so good. But when I set down what I *will* do, or what I *have* done, on this or that occasion: the resolution or action is before me, either to be adhered to, withdrawn, or amended; and I have entered into compact with myself, as I may say; having given it under my own hand to *improve*, rather than to go *backward*, as I live longer.

I would willingly, therefore, write to *you*, if I *might*; the rather as it would be the more inspiriting to have some end in view in what I write; some friend to please; besides merely seeking to gratify my passion for scribbling.

But why, if your mother will permit our correspondence on communicating to her all that passes

in it, and if she would condescend to one only condition, may it not be complied with?

Would she not, do you think, my dear, be prevailed upon to have the communication made to her, *in confidence?*

If there were any prospect of a reconciliation with my friends, I should not have so much regard for my *pride*, as to be afraid of *any body's* knowing how much I have been *outwitted*, as you call it. I would in *that* case (when I had left Mr. Lovelace) acquaint your mother and all my own friends with the whole of my story. It would behove me so to do, for my own reputation, and for their satisfaction.

But if I have no such prospect, what will the communication of my reluctance to go away with Mr. Lovelace, and of his arts to frighten me away, avail me? Your mother has hinted, that my friends would insist upon my returning to them, (as a proof of the truth of my plea) to be disposed of, without condition, at their pleasure. If I scrupled this, my brother would rather triumph over me than keep my secret. Mr. Lovelace, whose pride already so ill brooks my regrets for meeting him, (when he thinks, if I had not, I must have been Mr. Solmes's wife) would perhaps treat me with indignity: and thus, deprived of all refuge and protection, I should become the scoff of men of intrigue; and be thought, with too great an appearance of reason, a disgrace to my sex—while that avowed love, *however indiscreetly shown*, which is followed by marriage, will find more excuses made for it *than generally it ought to find.*

But, if your mother will receive the communication in confidence, pray show her all that I have written, or shall write. If my past conduct in that

case shall not be found to deserve *heavy* blame, I shall then perhaps have the benefit of *her* advice, as well as *your's*. And if after a re-establishment in her favour, I shall wilfully deserve blame for the time to come, I will be content to be denied your's as well as her's for ever.

As to cramping my spirit, as you call it (were I to sit down to write what I know your mother must see) that, my dear, is already cramped. And do not think so unhandsomely of your mother, as to fear that she would make *partial* constructions against me. Neither you nor I can doubt, but that, had she been left unprepossessedly to herself, she would have shown favour to me. And so, I dare say, would my uncle Antony. Nay, my dear, I can extend my charity still further: for I am sometimes of opinion, that were my brother and sister *absolutely certain*, that they had so far ruined me in the opinion of both my uncles, as that they need not be apprehensive of my clashing with their interests; they would not oppose a pardon, although they might not wish a reconciliation; especially if I would make a few sacrifices to them: which, I assure you, I should be inclined to make were I wholly free, and independent on this man. You know I never valued myself upon worldly acquisitions, but as they enlarged my power to do things I loved to do. And if I were denied the power, I must, as I now do, curb my inclination.

Do not, however, think me guilty of an affectation in what I have said of my brother and sister. Severe enough I am sure it is, in the most favourable sense. And an indifferent person will be of opinion, that *they* are much better warranted than ever, for the sake of the family-honour, to seek to ruin me in the favour of all my friends.

But to the former topic—try, my dear, if your

mother will, upon the condition above given, permit our correspondence, on seeing all we write. But if she will not, what a selfishness would there be in my love to you, were I to wish you to forego your duty for my sake!

And now, one word as to the freedom I have treated you with in this tedious expostulatory address. I presume upon your forgiveness of it, because few friendships are founded on such a basis as ours: which is, 'freely to *give* reproof, and thankfully to *receive* it, as occasions arise; that so either may have opportunity to clear up mistakes, to acknowledge and amend errors, as well in behaviour as in words and deeds; and to rectify and confirm each other in the judgment each shall form upon persons, things, and circumstances.' And all this upon the following consideration: 'That it is much more eligible, as well as honourable, to be corrected with the gentleness that may be expected from an undoubted friend, than by continuing either blind or wilful, to expose ourselves to the censures of an envious, and perhaps malignant world.'

But it is as needless, I dare say, to remind you of this, as it is to *repeat* my request, so often repeated, that you will not, in your turn, spare the follies and the faults of

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

Subjoined to the above.

I said, that I would avoid writing any thing of my own particular affairs in the above address, if I could.

I will write one letter more, to inform you how I stand with this man. But, my dear, you must

permit that one, and your answer to it, (for I want your advice upon the contents of mine) and the copy of one I have written to my aunt, to be the last that shall pass between us, while the prohibition continues.

I fear, I very much fear, that my unhappy situation will draw me in to be guilty of evasion, of little affectations, and of curvings from the plain, simple truth, which I was wont to delight in, and prefer to every other consideration. But allow me to say, and this for your sake, and in order to lessen your mother's fears of any ill consequences that she might apprehend from our correspondence, that if I am at any time guilty of a failure in these respects, I will not *go on in it*, but endeavour to recover my lost ground, that I may not bring error into habit.

I have deferred going to town, at Mrs. Sorlings's earnest request; but have fixed my removal to Monday, as I shall acquaint you in my next.

I have already made a progress in that next; but having an unexpected opportunity, will send this by itself.

LETTER XL.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Friday morning, April 21.

My mother will not comply with your condition, my dear. I hinted it to her as from myself. But the *Harlowes* (excuse me) have got her entirely in with them. It is a scheme of mine, she told me, formed to draw her into your party against your parents. Which, for her own sake, she is very careful about.

Don't be so much concerned about my mother and me, once more, I beg of you. We shall do well enough together—now a falling out, now a falling in.

It used to be so, when you were not in the question.

Yet do I give you my sincerest thanks for every line of your reprehensive letters; which I intend to read as often as I find my temper rises.

I will freely own, however, that I winced a little at first reading them. But I see, that on every re-perusal, I shall love and honour you still more, if possible, than before.

Yet I think I have one advantage over you, and which I will hold through this letter, and through all my future letters; that is, that I will treat you as freely as you treat me; and yet will never think an *apology necessary to you for my freedom.*

But that you so think with respect to me is the effect of your gentleness of temper, with a little sketch of implied reflection on the warmth of mine. Gentleness in a woman you hold to be no fault: nor do I a little due or provoked warmth—but what is this but praising on both sides what neither of us can help; nor perhaps *wish* to help? You can no more go out of your road than I can go out of mine. It would be a pain to either to do so: what then is it in either's approving of her own natural bias, by making a virtue of necessity?

But one observation I will add, that were *your* character and *my* character to be truly drawn, mine would be allowed to be the most natural. Shades and lights are equally necessary in a fine picture. Yours would be surrounded with such a flood of brightness, with such a glory, that it would indeed dazzle; but leave one heartless to imitate it.

O may you not suffer from a base world for your

gentleness; while my temper, by its warmth, keeping all imposition at distance, though less amiable in general, affords me not reason, as I have mentioned heretofore, to wish to make an exchange with you!

I should indeed be inexcuseable to open my lips by way of contradiction to my mother, had I such a fine spirit as yours to deal with. Truth is truth, my dear! Why should narrowness run away with the praises due to a noble expansion of heart? If every body would speak out, as I do, (that is to say, give praise where only praise is due; dispraise where due likewise) *shame*, if not *principle*, would mend the world—nay, shame would *introduce* principle in a generation or two. Very true, my dear. Do you apply. I dare not.—For I *fear* you almost as much as I *love* you.

I will give you an instance, nevertheless, which will a-new demonstrate, that none but very generous and noble-minded people ought to be implicitly obeyed. You know what I said above, that *truth* is *truth*.

Inconveniences will sometimes arise from having to do with persons of modesty and scrupulousness. Mr. Hickman, you say, is a *modest* man. He put your corrective packet into my hand with a very fine bow, and a self-satisfied air [*we'll consider what you say of this honest man by-and-by, my dear*]: his strut was not gone off, when in came my mother as I was reading it.

When some folks find their anger has made them considerable, they will be always angry, or seeking occasions for anger.

Why, now, Mr. Hickman—why, now, Nancy,—[as I was huddling the packet into my pocket at her entrance] you have a letter brought you this instant.—While the *modest* man, with his pausing

brayings, Mad-a—mad-dam, looked as if he knew not whether he had best to run, and leave me and my mother to fight it out, or to stand his ground and see fair play.

It would have been poor to tell a lie for it. She flung away. I went out at the opposite door to read the contents; leaving Mr. Hickman to exercise his *white teeth* upon his thumb nails.

When I had read your letters, I went to find out my mother. I told her the generous contents, and that you desired that the prohibition might be adhered to. I proposed your condition, as from myself; and was rejected, as above.

She supposed she was finely painted between two 'young creatures, who had more wit than prudence:' and instead of being prevailed upon by the generosity of your sentiments, made use of your opinion only to confirm her own, and renewed her prohibitions, charging me to return no other answer but that she *did* renew them: adding, that they should stand till your relations were reconciled to you; hinting as if she had *engaged for as much:* and expected my compliance.

I thought of your reprehensions, and was *meek*, though not pleased. And let me tell you, my dear, that as long as I can satisfy my own mind, that good is intended, and that it is hardly possible that evil should ensue from our correspondence—as long as I know, that this prohibition proceeds originally from the same spiteful minds which have been the occasion of all these mischiefs—as long as I know, that it is not your fault if your relations are not reconciled to you; and that upon conditions which no reasonable people would refuse—you must give me leave, with all deference to your judgment, and to your excellent lessons (*which would reach almost every case of this kind but the*

present) to insist upon your writing to me, and that minutely, as if this prohibition had not been laid.

It is not from humour, from perverseness, that I insist upon this. I cannot express how much my heart is in your concerns. And you must, in short, allow me to think, that if I can do you service by writing, I shall be better justified in *continuing* to write than my mother is in her prohibition.

But yet, to satisfy you all I can, I will as seldom return answers, while the interdict lasts, as may be consistent with my notions of friendship, and with the service I owe you and can do you.

As to your expedient of writing by Hickman [and now, my dear, your *modest man* comes in: and as you love modesty in that sex, I will do my endeavour, by holding him at a proper distance, to keep him in your favour] I know what you mean by it, my sweet friend. It is to make that man significant with me. As to the correspondence, THAT *shall* go on, I do assure you, be as scrupulous as you please—so that *that* will not suffer if I do *not* close with your proposal as to him.

I must tell you, that I think it will be honour enough for him to have his name made use of so frequently betwixt us. This, of itself, is placing a confidence in him, that will make him walk bolt upright, and display his *white hand*, and his *fine diamond ring*; and most mightily lay down his services *and* his pride to oblige, *and* his diligence, *and* his fidelity, *and* his contrivances to keep our secret, *and* his excuses, *and* his evasions to my mother, when challenged by her; with fifty *ands* beside: and will it not moreover give him pretence and excuse oftener than ever to pad-nag it hither to good Mrs. Howe's fair daughter?

But to admit him into my company tête-à-tête, and into my closet, as often as I would wish to

write to you; I only to dictate to his pen—my mother all the time supposing that I was going to be heartily in love with him—to make him master of my sentiments, and of my *heart*, as I may say, when I write to you—indeed, my dear, I *won't*. Nor, were I married to the best HE in England, would I honour him with the communication of my correspondencies.

No, my dear, it is sufficient, surely, for him to parade it in the character of our letter-conveyer, and to be honoured in a cover, and never fear but, modest as you think him, he will make enough of that.

You are always blaming me for want of generosity to this man, and for abuse of power. But I profess, my dear, I cannot tell how to help it. Do, dear now, let me spread my plumes a little, and now-and-then make myself feared. This is my time you know, since it would be no more to *my* credit than to *his* to give myself those airs when I am married. He has a joy when I am pleased with him, that he would not know but for the pain my displeasure gives him.

Men, no more than *women*, know how to make a moderate use of power. Is not that seen every day, from the prince to the peasant? If I do not make Hickman quake now-and-then, he will endeavour to make me fear. All the animals in the creation are more or less in a state of hostility with each other. The wolf, that runs away from a lion, will devour a lamb the next moment. I remember, that I was once so enraged at a game chicken, that was continually pecking at another (a poor humble one, as I thought him) that I had the offender caught, and without more ado, in a *pet of humanity*, wrung his neck off. What followed this execution? Why that other grew insolent as soon

as *his* insulter was gone, and was continually pecking at one or two under *him*. Peck and be hanged, said I,—I might as well have preserved the first; for I see it is the *nature of the beast*.

Excuse my flippancies. I wish I were with you. I would make you smile in the midst of your gravest airs, as I used to do. O that you had accepted of my offer to attend you! But *nothing that I offer* will you accept.—Take care!—You will make me very angry with you: and whem I am, you know I value nobody: for, dearly as I love you, I must be, and cannot always help it,

Your saucy

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XLI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Friday, April 21.

Mr. Lovelace communicated to me this morning early, from his intelligencer, the news of my brother's scheme. I like him the better for making very light of it; and for his treating it with contempt. And indeed, had I not had the hint of it from you, I should have suspected it to be some contrivance of his, in order to hasten me to town, where he has long wished to be himself.

He read me the passage in that Leman's letter, which is pretty much to the effect of what you wrote to me from Miss Lloyd; with this addition, that one Singleton, a master of a Scots vessel, is the man who is to be the principal in this act of violence.

I have seen him. He has been twice entertained at Harlowe Place, as my brother's friend. He has

the air of a very bold and fearless man; and I fancy it must be his project; as my brother, I suppose, talks to every body of the rash step I have taken; for he did not spare me before he had this seeming reason to censure me.

This Singleton lives at Leith; so, perhaps I am to be carried to my brother's house not far from that port.

Putting these passages together, I am not a little apprehensive, that the design, lightly as Mr. Lovelace, from his fearless temper, treats it, may be attempted to be carried into execution; and of the consequences that may attend it, if it be.

I asked Mr. Lovelace, seeing him so frank and cool, what he would advise me to do.

Shall I ask *you*, madam, what are your own thoughts?—Why I return the question, said he, is, because you have been so very earnest that I should leave you as soon as you are in London, that I know not what to propose without offending you.

My opinion is, said I, that I should studiously conceal myself from the knowledge of every body but Miss Howe; and that you should leave me; since they will certainly conclude, that where *one* is the *other* is not far off: and it is easier to trace *you* than *me*.

You would not surely wish, said he, to fall into your brother's hands by such a violent measure as this? I propose not to throw myself officiously in their way; but should they have reason to think I avoided them, would not that whet their diligence to find you, and their courage to attempt to carry you off; and subject me to insults that no man of spirit can bear?

Lord bless me! said I, to what has this one fatal step that I have been betrayed into——

Dearest madam, let me beseech you to forbear

this harsh language, when you see, by this new scheme, how determined they were upon carrying their old ones, had you not been *betrayed*, as you call it. Have I offered to defy the laws of society, as this brother of yours must do, if any thing be intended by this project? I hope you will be pleased to observe, that there are as violent and as wicked enterprisers as myself—but this is so very wild a project, that I think there can be no room for apprehensions from it. I know your brother well. When at college, he had always a romantic turn: but never had a head for any thing but to puzzle and confound himself. A half-invention, and a whole conceit; but not master of talents to do himself good, or others harm, but as those others gave him the power by their own folly.

This is very volubly run off, sir!—But violent spirits are but too much alike; at least in their methods of resenting. You will not presume to make yourself a less innocent man surely, who had determined to brave my whole family in person, if my folly had not saved *you* the rashness, and *them* the insult—

Dear madam!—Still must it be *folly, rashness!*—It is as impossible for you to think tolerably of any body *out* of your own family, as it is for any one *in it* to *deserve* your love! Forgive me, dearest creature! if I did not love you as never man loved a woman, I might appear more indifferent to preferences so undeservedly made. But let me ask you, madam, what have you borne from *me?* What cause have I given you to treat me with so much severity, and so little confidence: and what have you not borne from *them?* Malice and ill-will, indeed, sitting in judgment upon my character, may not give sentence in my favour: but what *of your own knowledge* have you against me?

Spirited questions, were they not, my dear?—

And they were asked with as spirited an air. I was startled. But I was resolved not to desert myself.

Is this a *time*, Mr. Lovelace, is this a *proper* occasion taken, to give yourself these high airs to me, a young creature destitute of protection? It is a surprising question you ask me. Had I aught against you *of my own knowledge*—I can tell you, sir—and away I would have flung.

He snatched my hand, and besought me not to leave him in displeasure. He pleaded his passion for me, and my severity to him, and partiality for those from whom I had suffered so much; and whose intended violence, he said, was now the subject of our deliberation.

I was forced to hear him.

You condescended, dearest creature, said he, to ask my advice. It is very easy, give me leave to say, to advise you what to do. I hope I may, on this *new* occasion, speak without offence, *notwithstanding your former injunctions*—you see that there can be no hope of reconciliation with your relations. Can you, madam, consent to honour with your hand a wretch whom you have never yet obliged with one *voluntary* favour!

What a *recriminating*, what a *reproachful way*, my dear, was this of putting a question of this nature!

I expected not from him, at the time, and just as I was very angry with him, either the question or the manner. I am ashamed to recollect the confusion I was thrown into; all your advice in my head at the moment: yet his words so prohibitory. He confidently seemed to enjoy my confusion; [*indeed, my dear, he knows not what respectful love is!*] and gazed upon me as if he would have looked me through.

He was still more declarative afterwards, indeed,

as I shall mention by-and-by: but it was half extorted from him.

My heart struggled violently between resentment and shame, to be thus teased by one who seemed to have all his passions at command, at a time when I had very little over *mine!* till at last I burst into tears, and was going from him in high disgust: when, throwing his arms about me, with an air, however, the most tenderly respectful, he gave a *stupid* turn to the subject.

It was far from his heart, he said, to take so much *advantage* of the *streight* which the discovery of my brother's foolish project had brought me into, as to renew, *without my permission*, a proposal which I had hitherto discountenanced, and which for *that* reason—

And then he came with his *half-sentences*, apologizing for what he had not so much as *half-proposed*.

Surely he had not the insolence to intend to tease me, to see if I could be brought to speak what became me not to speak—but, whether he had or not, it *did* tease me; insomuch that my very heart was fretted, and I broke out at last into fresh tears, and a declaration that I was very unhappy. And just then recollecting how like a tame fool I stood with his arms about me, I flung from him with indignation. But he seized my hand as I was going out of the room, and upon his knees besought my stay for one moment: and then, in words the most clear and explicit, tendered himself to my acceptance, as the most effectual means to disappoint my brother's scheme, and set all right.

But what could I say to this?—Extorted from him, as it seemed to me, rather as the effect of his compassion than his love? What *could* I say? I

paused, I looked silly—I am sure I looked *very* silly. He suffered me to pause, and look silly; *waiting for* me *to say something*: and at last (ashamed of my confusion, and aiming to make an *excuse for it*) I told him that I desired he would avoid such measures as might add to the uneasiness which, it must be visible to him, I had, when he reflected upon the irreconcileableness of my friends, and upon what might follow from this unaccountable project of my brother.

He promised to be governed by me in every thing. And again the wretch, instead of pressing his former question, asked me, *if I forgave him for the humble suit he had made to me?* What had I to do, but to try for a palliation of my confusion, since it served me not?

I told him I had hopes it would not be long before Mr. Morden arrived; and doubted not, that that gentleman would be the readier to engage in my favour, when he found, that I made no other use of *his* (Mr. Lovelace's) assistance, than to free myself from the addresses of a man so disagreeable to me as Mr. Solmes: I must therefore wish, that every thing might remain as it was, till I could hear from my cousin.

This, although teased by him as I was, was not, you see, my dear, a *denial*. But he must throw himself into a heat, rather than try to persuade; which any other man, in his situation, I should think, would have done: and this warmth obliged me to adhere to my seeming negative.

This was what he said, with a vehemence that must harden any woman's mind, who had a spirit above being frighted into passiveness.

Good God! and will you, madam, still resolve to show me, that I am to hope for no share in your

favour, while any the remotest prospect remains, that you will be received by my bitterest enemies, at the price of my utter rejection?

This was what I returned, with warmth, and with a salving art *too*—You have seen, Mr. Lovelace, how much my brother's violence can affect me: but you will be mistaken if you let loose yours upon me, with a thought of terrifying me into measures the contrary of which you have acquiesced with.

He only besought me to suffer his *future actions* to speak for him; and if I saw him worthy of any favour, that I would not let him be the *only* person within my knowledge who was not entitled to my consideration.

You refer to a *future time*, Mr. Lovelace; so do I, for the *future proof* of a merit you seem to think for the *past time* wanting: and *justly* you think so. And I was again going from him.

One word more he begged me to hear—he was determined studiously to avoid all mischief, and every step that might lead to mischief, let my brother's proceedings, short of a violence upon my person, be what they would: but if any attempt that should extend to that were to be made, would I have him to be a quiet spectator of my being seized, or carried back, or on board, by this Singleton; or, in case of extremity, was he not permitted to stand up in my defence?

Stand up in my defence, Mr. Lovelace!—I should be very miserable were there to be a call for that. But do you think I might not be *safe* and *private* in London? By your friend's description of the widow's house, I should think I might be safe there.

The widow's house, he replied, as described by his friend, being *a back house within a front one*, and

looking to a garden rather than to a street, had the *appearance* of privacy: but if, when there, it was not approved, it would be easy to find another more to my liking—though, as to his part, the method he would advise should be, to write to my uncle Harlowe as one of my trustees, and wait the issue of it here at Mrs. Sorling's, fearlessly directing it to be answered *hither*. To be afraid of little spirits was but to encourage insults, he said. The substance of the letter should be, 'To demand as a right what they would refuse if requested as a courtesy: to acknowledge that I had put myself [too well, he said, did their treatment justify me] into the protection of the *ladies* of his family [by whose orders, and Lord M.'s, he himself would appear to act]: but that upon my own terms; which were such, that I was under no obligation to those ladies for the favour; it being no more than they would have granted to any one of my sex, equally distressed.' If I approved not of this method, happy should he think himself, he said, if I would honour him with the opportunity of making such a claim in his own name—but this was a point [with his *buts* again in the same breath!] that *he durst but just touch upon.* He hoped, however, that I would think their violence a sufficient inducement for me to take such a wished-for resolution.

Inwardly vexed, I told him, that he himself had proposed to leave me when I was in town: that I expected he would: and that, when I was known to be absolutely independent, I should consider what to write and what to do: but that, while he was with me, I neither would nor could.

He would be very sincere with me, he said: this project of my brother's had changed the face of things. He must, before he left me, see whether I

should or should not approve of the London widow and her family, if I chose to go thither. They might be people whom my brother might buy. But if he saw they were persons of integrity, he then might go for a day or two, or so. But he must needs say, he could not leave me longer at a time.

Do you propose, sir, said I, to take up your lodgings in the house where I shall lodge?

He did not, he said, as he knew the use I intended to make of his absence, and my punctilio—and yet the house where he had lodgings was new-fronting, and not in condition to receive him: but he could go to his friend Belford's, in Soho; or perhaps he might reach to the same gentleman's house at Edgware, over night, and return on the mornings, till he had reason to think this wild project of my brother's laid aside. But to no greater distance till then should he care to venture.

The result of all was, to set out on Monday next for town. I hope it will be in a happy hour.

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XLII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, April 21.

As it was not probable that the lady could give so particular an account of her own confusion, in the affecting scene she mentions on Mr. Lovelace's offering himself to her acceptance; the following extracts are made from his letter of the above date.

AND now, Belford, what wilt thou say, if, like the fly buzzing about the bright taper, I had like to have singed the silken wings of my liberty? Never was man in greater danger of being caught in his

own snares: all my views anticipated; all my schemes untried: the admirable creature not brought to town; nor one effort made to know if she be really angel or woman.

I offered myself to her acceptance, with a suddenness, 'tis true, that gave her no time to wrap herself in reserves; and in terms *less tender* than *fervent,* tending to upbraid her for her past indifference, and to remind her of her injunctions: for it was the fear of her brother, not her love of me, that had inclined her to dispense with those injunctions.

I never beheld so sweet a confusion. What a glory to the pencil, could it do justice to it, and to the mingled impatience which visibly informed every feature of the most meaning and most beautiful face in the world! She hemmed twice or thrice: her look, now so charmingly silly, then so sweetly significant; till at last the lovely teaser, teased by my hesitating expectation of her answer, out of all power of articulate speech, burst into tears, and was turning from me with precipitation, when, presuming to fold her in my happy arms—O think not, best beloved of my heart, said I, think not, that this motion, which you may believe to be so contrary to your *former injunctions,* proceeds from a design to avail myself of the cruelty of your relations: if I have disobliged you by it, (and you know with what *respectful tenderness* I have presumed to hint it) it shall be my utmost care for the future—there I stopped——

Then she spoke; but with vexation—I am—I am —*very* unhappy—tears trickling down her crimson cheeks; and her sweet face, as my arms still encircled the finest waist in the world, sinking upon my shoulder; the dear creature so absent, that she knew not the honour she permitted me.

But why, but why unhappy, my dearest life?

said I:—all the gratitude that ever overflowed the heart of the most obliged of men—

Justice to myself there stopped my mouth: for what *gratitude* did I owe her for obligations so involuntary?

Then recovering herself, and her usual reserves, and struggling to free herself from my clasping arms, How now, sir! said she, with a cheek more indignantly glowing, and eyes of fiercer lustre.

I gave way to her angry struggle; but absolutely overcome by so charming a display of innocent confusion, I caught hold of her hand as she was flying from me; and kneeling at her feet, O my angel, said I, (quite destitute of reserve, and hardly knowing the tenor of my own speech; and had a parson been there, I had certainly been a gone man), receive the vows of your faithful Lovelace. Make him yours, and only yours, for ever. This will answer every end. Who will dare to form plots and stratagems against my wife? that you are not so, is the ground of all their foolish attempts, and of their insolent hopes in Solmes's favour.—O be mine!—I beseech you (thus on my knee I *beseech* you) to be mine. We shall then have all the world with us. And every body will applaud an event that every body expects.

Was the devil in me! I no more intended all this ecstatic nonsense, than I thought the same moment of flying in the air! all power is with this charming creature. It is I, not she, at this rate, that must fail in the arduous trial.

Didst thou ever before hear of a man uttering solemn things by an involuntary impulse, in defiance of premeditation, and of all his own proud schemes? But this sweet creature is able to make a man forego every purpose of his heart that is

not favourable to her. And I verily think I should be inclined to spare her all further trial [and yet what trial has she had?] were it not for the contention that her vigilance has set on foot, *which* shall overcome the *other*. Thou knowest my generosity to my uncontending Rosebud—and sometimes do I qualify my ardent aspirations after even this very fine creature, by this reflection:—that the most charming woman on earth, were she an empress, can excel the meanest, in the customary visibles only—such is the equality of the dispensation, to the prince and the peasant, in this prime gift WOMAN.

Well, but what was the result of this involuntary impulse on my part?—wouldst thou not think, I was taken at my offer?—an offer so solemnly made, and on one knee too?

No such thing!—the pretty trifler let me off as easily as I could have wished.

Her brother's project; and to find that there were no hopes of a reconciliation for her; and the apprehension she had of the mischiefs that might ensue—these, not *my offer*, nor *love of me*, were the causes to which she ascribed all her sweet confusion—an *ascription* that is high treason against my sovereign pride—to make marriage with *me*, but a second-place refuge; and as good as to tell me, that her confusion was owing to her concern that there were no hopes that my enemies would accept of her intended offer to renounce a man who had ventured his life for her, and was still ready to run the same risk in her behalf!

I re-urged her to make me happy—but I was to be postponed to her Cousin Morden's arrival. On him are now placed all her hopes.

I raved; but to no purpose.

Another letter was to be sent, or had been sent,

to her aunt Hervey; to which she hoped an answer.

Yet sometimes I think, that fainter and fainter would have been her procrastinations, had I been a man of courage—*but so fearful was I of offending.*

A confounded thing! the man to be so bashful; the woman to want so much courting!—how shall two such come together; no kind mediatress in the way?

But I must be contented. 'Tis seldom, however, that a love *so ardent* as mine meets with a spirit *so resigned* in the *same person.* But true love, I am now convinced, only wishes: nor has it any active will but that of the adored object.

But, O the charming creature, again of herself to mention London! had Singleton's plot been of *my own contriving*, a more happy expedient could not have been thought of to induce her to resume her purpose of going thither; nor can I divine what could be her reason for postponing it.

I inclose the letter from Joseph Leman, which I mentioned to thee in mine of Monday last *, with my answer to it. I cannot resist the vanity that urges me to the communication. Otherwise, it were better, perhaps, that I suffer thee to imagine, that this lady's stars fight against her, and dispense the opportunities in my favour, which are only the consequences of my own superlative invention.

* See p. 185.

LETTER XLIII.

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ. HIS HONNER.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONNER, Sat. April 15.

THIS is to let your honner know, as how I have been emploied in a bisness I would have been excused from, if so be I could, for it is to gitt evidense from a young man, who has of late com'd out to be my cuzzen by my grandmother's side; and but lately come to live in these partes, about a very vile thing, as younge master calls it, relating to your honner. God forbid I should call it so without your leafe. It is not for so plane a man as I be, to tacks my betters. It is consarning one Miss Batirton, of Nottingam; a very pritty creature, belike.

You honner got her away, it seems, by a false letter to her, macking believe as how her she-cuzzen, that she derely loved, was coming to see her; and was tacken ill upon the rode: and so Miss Batirton set out in a shase, and one sarvant, to fet her cuzzen from the inne where she laid sick, as she thote: and the sarvant was tricked, and braute back the shase; but Miss Batirton was not harde of for a month, or so. And when it came to passe, that her frends founde her out and would have prossekutid your honner, your honner was gone abroad: and so she was broute to bed, as one may say, before your honner's return: and she got colde in her lyin-inn, and lanquitched, and soon died: and the child is living; but your honner never troubles your honner's hedd about it in the least. And this and some such other matters of verry bad reporte, Squier Solmes was to tell my

young lady of, if so be she would have harde him speke, before we lost her sweet company, as I may say, from heere *.

I hope your honner will excuse me. But I was forsed to tell all I harde, because they had my cuzzen in to them, and he would have said he had tolde me: so could not be melely mouthed, for fere to be blone up, and plese your honner.

Your honner helped me to many ugly stories to tell against your honner to my younge master, and younge mistress; but did not tell me about this.

I most humbelly beseche your honner to be good and kinde and fethful to my deerest younge lady, now you have her; or I shall brake my harte for having done some dedes that have helped to bringe things to this passe. Pray your dere good honner, be just! prayey do!—as God shall love ye! prayey do!—I cannot write no more for this pressent, for verry fear and grief—

But now I am cumm'd to my writing agen, will your honner be pleased to tell me, if as how there be any danger to your honner's life from this bisness; for my cuzzen is actlie hier'd to go down to Miss Batirton's frendes to see if they will stir in it: for you must kno' your honner, as how he lived in the Batirton family at the time, and could be a good evidense, and all that.

I hope it was not so verry bad, as Titus says it was; for he ses as how there was a rape in the case betwixt you *at furste,* and plese your honner; and my Cuzzen Titus is a very honist younge man as ever brocke bred. This is his carackter; and this made me willinger to owne him for my relation, when we came to talck.

If there should be danger of your honner's life,

* See Vol. II. p. 88, 89.

I hope your honner will not be hanged like as one of us common men: only have your hedd cut off, or so: and yet it is pity such a hedd should be lossed: but if as how it should be prossekutid to that furr, which God forbid, be plesed natheless to thinck of youre fethful Joseph Leman, before your hedd be condemned; for after condemnation, as I have been told, all will be the king's or the shreeve's.

I thote as how it was best to acquent your honner of this; and for you to let me kno' if I could do any thing to sarve your honner, and prevent mischief with my Cuzzen Titus, on his coming back from Nottingam, before he mackes his reporte.

I have gin him a hint already: for what, as I sed to him, Cuzzen Titus, signifies stirring up the coles and macking of strife, to make rich gentilfolkes live at variance, and to be cutting of throtes, and such-like?

Verry trewe, sed little Titus. And this, and plese your honner, gis me hopes of him, if so be your honner gis me direction; sen', as God kno'es, I have a poor, a verry poor invenshon; only a willing mind to prevent mischief, that is the chief of my aim, and always was, I bless my God!—els I could have made much mischief in my time; as indeed any sarvant may. Your honner natheless praises my invenshon every now-and-then: alas! and plese your honner, what invenshon should such a plane man as I have!—but when your honner sets me agoing by *your* fine invenshon, I can do well enuff. And I am sure I have a hearty good will to deserve your honner's faver, if I mought.

Two days, as I may say, off and on, have I been writing this long letter. And yet I have not sed

all I would say. For, be it knone unto your honner, as how I do not like that Capten Singleton, which I told you of *in my two last letters.* He is always laying his hedd and my younge master's hedd together; and I suspect much if so be some mischief is not going on between them: and still the more, as because my eldest younge lady semes to be joined to them sometimes.

Last week my younge master sed before my fase, *My harte's blood boiles over, Captain Singelton, for revenge upon this*—and he called your honner by a name it is not for such a won as me to say what. Capten Singelton whispred my younge master, being I was by. So younge master sed, *You may say any thing before Joseph; for, althoff he looks so seelie, he has as good a harte, and as good a hedd, as any sarvante in the world need to have.* My conscience touched me just then. But why should it? when all I do is to prevent mischeff; and seeing your honner has so much patience, which younge master has not; so am not affeard of telling your honner any thing whatsomever.

And furthermore, I have suche a desire to desarve your honner's bounty to me, as mackes me let nothing pass I can tell you of, to prevent harm: and too besides, your honner's goodness about the Blew Bore; which I have so good an accounte of!—I am sure I shall be bounden to bless your honner the longest day I have to live.

And then the Blew Bore is not all neither; sen', and plese your honner, the pritty sowe (God forgive me for gesting in so serus a matter) runs in my hedd likewise. I believe I shall love her, mayhap more than your honner would have me; for she begins to be kind and good-humered, and listens, and plese your honner, licke as *if she was*

among beans, when I talke about the Blew Bore, and all that.

Prayey, your honner, forgive the gesting of a poor plane man. We common fokes have our joys, and plese your honner, lick as our betters have; and if we be sometimes snubbed, we can find our underlings to snub them agen; and if not, we can get a wife mayhap, and snub her: so are masters some how or other oursells.

But how I try you honner's patience!—Sarvants will show their joyful hartes, tho'ff but in partinens, when encouredg'd.

Be plesed from the prems's to let me kno' if as how I can be put upon any sarvice to sarve your honner, and to sarve my deerest younge lady; which God grant! for I begin to be affearde for her, hearing what peple talck—to be sure your honner will not do her no *harme*, as a man may say. But I kno' your honner must be good to so wonderous a younge lady. How can you help it?—But heere my conscience smites me, that *but for some of my stories, which your honner taute me, my old master and my old lady, and the two old squires, would not have been able to be half so hard-hearted as they be, for all what my younge master and younge mistress sayes.*

And here is the sad thing; they cannot come to clere up matters with my deerest young lady, because, as *your honner has ordered it*, they have these stories as if bribed by me out of your honner's sarvant; which must not be known for fere you should kill'n and me too, and blacken the briber!—Ah! your honner! I doute as that I am a very vild fellow (Lord bless my soul, I pray God) and did not intend it.

But if my deerest younge lady should come to harm, and plese your honner, the horsepond at

the Blew Bore—but the Lord preserve us from all bad mischeff, and all bad endes, I pray the Lord!—For tho'ff your honner is kind to me in worldly pelff, yet *what shall a man get to loos his soul*, as holy Skrittuer says, and plese your honner?

But natheless I am in hope of reppentence hereafter, being but a younge man, if I do wrong thro' ignorens: your honner being a grate man, and a grate wit; and I a poor crature, not worthy notice; and your honner able to answer for all. But howsomever I am

Your honner's fethful sarvant in all dewtie,

JOSEPH LEMAN.

April 15 and 16.

LETTER XLIV.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOSEPH LEMAN.

HONEST JOSEPH, Monday, April 17.

You have a worse opinion of your invention than you ought to have. I must praise it again. Of a plain man's head, I have not known many better than yours. How often have your forecast and discretion answered my wishes in cases which I could not foresee, not knowing how my general directions would succeed, or what might happen in the execution of them? you are too doubtful of your own abilities, honest Joseph; that's your fault. But it being a fault that is owing to natural *modesty*, you ought rather to be *pitied* for it than *blamed*.

The affair of Miss Betterton was a youthful frolic. I love dearly to exercise my invention I do assure you, Joseph, that I have ever had more pleasure in my contrivances, than in the end

of them. I am no sensual man; but a man of spirit—one woman is like another—*you understand me, Joseph*——in coursing, all the sport is made by the winding hare. A barn-door chick is better eating. *Now you take me, Joseph.*

Miss Betterton was but a tradesman's daughter. The family indeed were grown rich, and aimed at a new line of gentry; and were unreasonable enough to expect a man of my family would marry her. I was honest. I gave the young lady no hope of that; for she put it to me. She resented: kept up, and was kept up. A little innocent contrivance was necessary to get her out—but no rape in the case, I assure you, Joseph—she loved me: I loved her. Indeed, when I got her to the inn, I asked her no questions. It is cruel to ask a modest woman for her consent. It is creating difficulties to both. Had not her friends been officious, I had been constant and faithful to her to this day, as far as I know—for then I had not known my angel.

I went not abroad upon *her* account. She loved me too well, to have appeared against me. She refused to sign a paper they had drawn up for her, to found a prosecution upon: and the brutal creatures would not permit the midwife's assistance, till her life was in danger; and, I believe, to this her death was owing.

I went into mourning for her, though abroad at the time. A distinction I have ever paid to those worthy creatures who died in childbed by me.

I was ever nice in my loves. These were the rules I laid down to myself on my entrance into active life: to set the mother above want, if her friends were cruel, and if I could not get her a husband worthy of her: to shun common women: a piece of justice I owed to innocent ladies, as

well as to myself: to marry off a former mistress, if possible, before I took to a new one: to maintain a lady handsomely in her lying-in: to provide for the little-one, if it lived, according to the degree of its mother: to go into mourning for the mother if she died. And the promise of this was a great comfort to the pretty dears as they grew near their times.

All my errors, all my expenses, have been with and upon women. So I could acquit my conscience (acting thus honourably by them) as well as my discretion as to point of fortune.

All men love women: and find me a man of more honour in these points if you can, Joseph.

No wonder the sex love me as they do!

But *now* I am strictly virtuous. I am reformed. So I have been for a long, long time: resolving to marry, as soon as I can prevail upon the most admirable of women to have me. I think of nobody else. It is impossible I should. I have spared very pretty girls for her sake. Very true, Joseph! so set your honest heart at rest—you see the pains I take to satisfy your qualms.

But, as to Miss Betterton—no rape in the case, I repeat. Rapes are unnatural things: and more rare than are imagined, Joseph. I should be loth to be put to such a streight. I never was. Miss Betterton was taken from me against her own will. In that case, her friends, not I, committed the rape.

I have contrived to see the boy twice, unknown to the aunt, who takes care of him; loves him; and would not now part with him, on any consideration.

The boy is a fine boy, I thank God. No father need be ashamed of him. He will be well provided for. If not, I would take care of him. He

will have his mother's fortune. They curse the father, ungrateful wretches! but bless the boy—upon the whole, there is nothing vile in this matter on my side; a great deal on the Bettertons.

Wherefore, Joseph, be not thou in pain, either for *my* head, or for *thy* own neck; nor for the Blue Boar; nor for thy pretty sow.

I love your jesting. Jesting better becomes a poor man, than qualms.—I love to have you jest. All we say, all we do, all we wish for, is a jest. He that makes life itself not so, is a sad fellow, and has the worst of it.

I doubt not, Joseph, but you have had your joys, as you say, as well as your betters. May you have more and more, honest Joseph!—He that grudges a poor man joy, ought to have none himself. Jest on therefore: jesting, I repeat, better becomes thee than qualms.

I had no need to tell you of Miss Betterton: did I not furnish you with stories enough without her's, against myself, to augment your credit with your cunning masters? besides, I was loth to mention Miss Betterton, her friends being all living, and in credit. I loved her too: for she was taken from me by her cruel friends, while our joys were young.

But enough of dear Miss Betterton. *Dear*, I say; for death *endears*.—Rest to her worthy soul! —there, Joseph, off went a deep sigh to the memory of Miss Betterton!

As to the journey of little Titus [I now recollect the fellow by his name] let that take its course: a lady dying in childbed eighteen months ago; no process begun in her lifetime; refusing herself to give evidence against me while she lived —pretty circumstances to found an indictment for a rape upon!

As to your young lady, the ever admirable Miss Clarissa Harlowe, I always courted her for a wife. Others rather expected marriage from the vanity of their own hearts, than from my promises. For I was always careful of what I promised. You know, Joseph, that I have gone beyond my promises to *you*. I do to every body: and why? because it is the best way of showing, that I have no grudging or narrow spirit. A promise is an obligation. *A just man will keep his promise. A generous man will go beyond it.* This is my rule.

If you doubt my honour to your young lady, it is more than she does. She would not stay with me an hour if she did. Mine is the steadiest heart in the world. Hast thou not reason to think it so? —why this squeamishness then, honest Joseph?

But it is because thou *art* honest: so I forgive thee. Whoever loves my divine Clarissa, loves me.

Let James Harlowe call me what names he will. For his sister's sake I will bear them. Do not be concerned for me. Her favour will make me rich amends. His own vilely malicious heart will make his blood *boil over* at any time: and when it does, thinkest thou that I will let it touch my conscience?—and if not *mine*, why should it touch *thine?* Ah! Joseph, Joseph! what a foolish teaser is thy conscience!—such a conscience, as gives a plain man trouble, when he intends to do for the best, is weakness, not conscience.

But say what thou wilt, write all thou knowest or hearest of, to me: I'll have patience with every body. Why should I not, when it is as much the desire of my heart, as it is of thine, to prevent mischief?

So now, Joseph, having taken all this pains to satisfy thy conscience, and answer all thy doubts,

and to banish all thy fears; let me come to a *new point*.

Your endeavours and mine, which were designed, *by round-about ways*, to reconcile all, even against the wills of the most obstinate, have not, we see, answered the end we hoped they would answer; but, on the contrary, have widened the unhappy differences between our families. But this has not been either your fault or mine: it is owing to the black pitch-like blood of your venomous hearted young master, *boiling over*, as he owns, that our honest wishes have hitherto been frustrated.

Yet we must proceed in the same course: we shall tire them out in time, and they will propose terms; and when they do, they shall find how reasonable mine shall be, little as they deserve from me.

Persevere therefore, Joseph; honest Joseph, persevere; and, unlikely as you may imagine the means, our desires will be at last obtained.

We have nothing for it now, but to go through with our work in the way we have begun. For since (as I told you in my last) my beloved mistrusts you, she will blow you up, if she be *not* mine. If she *be*, I can and will protect you; and as, if there will be any fault, in her opinion, it will be rather mine than yours, she *must* forgive you, and keep her husband's secrets, for the sake of his reputation: else she will be guilty of a great failure in her duty. So, now you have set your hand to the plough, Joseph, there is no looking back.

And what is the consequence of all this? one labour more, and that will be all that will fall to your lot; at least, of consequence.

My beloved is resolved not to think of marriage

till she has tried to move her friends to a reconciliation with her. You know they are determined not to be reconciled. She has it in her head, I doubt not, to make me submit to the people I hate; and if I did, they would rather insult me, than receive my condescension as they ought. She even owns, that she will renounce me, if they insist upon it, provided they will give up Solmes! So, to all appearance, I am still as far as ever from the happiness of calling her mine: indeed I am more likely than ever to lose her (if I cannot contrive some way to avail myself of the present critical situation); and then, Joseph, all I have been studying, and all you have been doing, will signify nothing.

At the place where we are, we cannot long be private. The lodgings are inconvenient for us, while both together, and while she refuses to marry. She wants to get me at a distance from her. There are extraordinary convenient lodgings in my eye in London, where we could be private, and all mischief avoided. When *there* (if I *get* her thither), she will insist, that I shall leave her. Miss Howe is for ever putting her upon contrivances. That, you know, is the reason I have been obliged, by your means, to play the family off at Harlowe Place upon Mrs. Howe, and Mrs. Howe upon her daughter—Ah, Joseph!—little need for your fears for my angel: *I* only am in danger—but were I the free liver I am reported to be, all this could I get over with a wet finger, as the saying is.

But, by the help of one of your hints, I have thought of an expedient which will do every thing; and raise your reputation, though already so high, higher still. This Singleton, I hear, is a fellow who loves enterprising: the view he has

to get James Harlowe to be his principal owner in a larger vessel which he wants to be put into the command of, may be the subject of their present close conversation. But since he is taught to have so good an opinion of you, Joseph, cannot you (still pretending an abhorrence of me, and of my contrivances), propose to Singleton to propose to James Harlowe (who so much thirsts for revenge upon me), to assist him with his whole ship's crew, upon occasion, to carry off his sister to Leith, where both have houses, or elsewhere?

You may tell them, that if this can be effected, it will make me raving mad; and bring your young lady into all their measures.

You can inform them, *as from my servant*, of the distance she keeps me at, in hopes of procuring her father's forgiveness, by cruelly giving me up, if insisted upon.

You can tell them, that as the only secret my servant has kept from you, is the place we are in, you make no doubt, that a two-guinea bribe will bring that out, and also an information when I shall be at a distance from her, that the enterprise may be conducted with safety.

You may tell them (still as from my servant) that we are about removing from inconvenient lodgings to others more convenient (which is true); and that I must be often absent from her.

If they listen to your proposal, you will promote your interest with Betty, by telling it to her as a secret. Betty will tell Arabella of it. Arabella will be overjoyed at any thing that will help forward her revenge upon me; and will reveal it (if her brother do not), to her Uncle Antony. He probably will whisper it to Mrs. Howe. She can keep nothing from her daughter, though they are always jangling. Her daughter will acquaint my

beloved with it. And if it will not, or if it will, come to my ears from some of those, you can write it to me, as in confidence, by way of preventing mischief; which is the study of us both.

I can then show it to my beloved. Then will she be for placing a greater confidence in me. That will convince me of her love, which now I am sometimes ready to doubt. She will be for hastening to the safer lodgings. I shall have a pretence to stay about her person, as a guard. She will be convinced, that there is no expectation to be had of a reconciliation. You can give James Harlowe and Singleton continual false scents, as I shall direct you; so that no mischief can possibly happen.

And what will be the happy, happy, thrice happy consequence?—The lady will be mine in an honourable way. We shall all be friends in good time. The two guineas will be an agreeable addition *to the many gratuities I have helped you to, by the like contrivances, from this stingy family.* Your reputation, both for head and heart, as I hinted before, will be heightened. The Blue Boar will also be yours. Nor shall you have the least difficulty about raising money to buy the stock, if it be worth your while to have it.

Betty will likewise then be yours. You have both saved money, it seems. The whole Harlowe family, whom you have so faithfully served, ['tis serving them surely, to prevent the mischief which their violent son would have brought upon them] will throw you in somewhat towards housekeeping. I will still add to your store. So nothing but happiness before you!

Crow, Joseph, crow! A dunghill of thy own in view: servants to snub at thy pleasure: a wife to quarrel with, or to love, as thy humour leads thee.

Landlord and *landlady* at every word: to be paid, instead of paying, for thy eating and drinking. But not thus happy only in thyself; happy in promoting peace and reconciliation between two good families, in the long run; without hurting any christian soul. O Joseph, honest Joseph! what envy wilt thou raise!—And who would be squeamish with such prospects before him!

This one labour, I repeat, crowns the work. If you can get but such a design entertained by them, whether they prosecute it or not, it will be equally to the purpose of

Your loving friend,

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XLV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MRS. HERVEY.

[*Inclosed in her last to Miss* Howe.]

HONOURED MADAM, Thursday, April 20.

Having not had the favour of an answer to a letter I took the liberty to write to you on the 14th, I am in some hopes that it may have miscarried; for I had much rather it should, than to have the mortification to think that my aunt Hervey deemed me unworthy of the honour of her notice.

In this hope, having kept a copy of it, and not being able to express myself in terms better suited to the unhappy circumstances of things, I transcribe and inclose what I then wrote *. And I humbly beseech you to favour the contents of it with your interest.

Hitherto it is in my power to perform what I

* The contents of the Letter referred to are given, p. 126.

undertake for in this letter; and it would be very grievous to me to be precipitated upon measures, which may render the desirable reconciliation more difficult.

If, madam, I were permitted to write to you with the hopes of being answered, I could clear my intention with regard to the step I have taken, although I could not perhaps acquit myself to some of my severest judges, of an imprudence previous to it. You, I am sure, would pity me, if you knew all I could say, and how miserable I am in the forfeiture of the good opinion of all my friends.

I flatter myself, that *their* favour is yet retrievable. But, whatever be the determination at Harlowe Place, do not *you*, my dearest aunt, deny me the favour of a few lines, to inform me if there can be any hope of a reconciliation upon terms less shocking than those heretofore endeavoured to be imposed upon me; or if (which God forbid!) I am to be for ever reprobated.

At least, my dear aunt, procure for me the justice of my wearing apparel, and the little money and other things which I wrote to my sister for, and mention in the inclosed to you; that I may not be destitute of common conveniences, or be under a necessity to owe an obligation for such, where (at present, however) I would least of all owe it.

Allow me to say, that had I designed what happened, I might (as to the money and jewels at least) have saved myself some of the mortifications which I have suffered, and which I still further apprehend, if my request be not complied with.

If you are permitted to encourage an eclaircissement of what I hint, I will open my whole heart to you, and inform you of every thing.

If it be any pleasure to have me mortified, be pleased to let it be known, that I am extremely

mortified: and yet it is *entirely* from my own reflections that I am so; having nothing to find fault with, in the behaviour of the person from whom every evil was apprehended.

The bearer, having business your way, will bring me your answer on Saturday morning, if you favour me according to my hopes. I knew not that I should have this opportunity till I had written the above.

I am, my dearest aunt,
Your ever dutiful
CL. HARLOWE.

Be pleased to direct for me, if I am to be favoured with a few lines, to be left at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square; and nobody shall ever know of your goodness to me, if you desire it to be kept a secret.

LETTER XLVI.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Saturday, April 22.

I CANNOT for my life account for your wretch's teasing ways. But he certainly doubts your love of him. In this *he* is a *modest* man, as well as *somebody* else; and tacitly confesses, that he does not deserve it.

Your Israelitish hankerings after the Egyptian onions (testified still more in your letter to your aunt); your often-repeated regrets for meeting him; for being betrayed away by him—these he cannot bear.

I have been looking back on the whole of his conduct, and comparing it with his general cha-

racter; and find that he is more *consistently*, more *uniformly*, mean, revengeful, and proud, than either of us once imagined.

From his cradle, as I may say, as an *only child*, and a *boy*, humorsome, spoiled, mischievous; the governor of his governors.

A libertine in his riper years, hardly regardful of appearances; and despising the sex in general, for the faults of particulars of it, who made themselves too cheap to him.

What has been his behaviour in your family, a CLARISSA in view, (from the time your foolish brother was obliged to take a life from him) but defiance for defiancies?—Getting you into his power by terror, by artifice. What politeness can be expected from such a man?

Well, but what in such a situation is to be done? Why, you must despise him: you must hate him—if you can—and run away from him—but whither? Whither indeed, now that your brother is laying foolish plots to put you in a still worse condition, as it may happen?

But if you cannot despise and hate him; if you care not to break with him; you must part with some punctilios: and if the so doing bring not on the solemnity, you must put yourself into the protection of the ladies of his family.

Their respect for you is of itself a security for his honour to you, if there could be any room for doubt. And at least, you should remind him of his offer to bring one of the Miss Montague's to attend you at your new lodgings in town, and accompany you till all is happily over.

This, you'll say, will be as good as *declaring* yourself to be his. *And so let it.* You ought not now to think of any thing else but to be *his*. Does not your brother's project convince you more and more of this?

Give over then, my dearest friend, any thoughts of this hopeless reconciliation, *which has kept you balancing thus long*. Your own, in the letter before me, that he made very explicit offers, though you give me not the very words. And he gave his reasons, I perceive, with his wishes, that you should accept them: which very few of the sorry fellows do; whose plea is generally but a compliment to our self-love—*that we must love them*, however presumptuous and unworthy, *because they love us.*

Were I in *your place*, and had *your* charming delicacies, I should, perhaps, do as you do. No doubt but I should expect that the man should urge me with respectful warmth; that he should supplicate with constancy, and that all his words and actions should tend to the one principal point—nevertheless, if I suspected art or delay, founded upon his doubts of my love, I would either condescend to clear up his doubts or renounce him for ever.

And in this last case, I, your Anna Howe, would exert myself, and either find you a private refuge, or resolve to share fortunes with you.

What a wretch, to be so easily answered by your reference to the arrival of your cousin Morden! But I am afraid that you were too scrupulous:—for did he not resent that reference?

Could we have *his* account of the matter, I fancy, my dear, I should think you over nice, over delicate *. Had you laid hold of his *acknowledged* explicitness, he would have been as much in *your* power, as now you seem to be in *his*—you

* The reader who has seen his account, which Miss Howe could not have seen, when she wrote thus, will observe that it was not possible for a person of Clarissa's true delicacy of mind to act otherwise than she did, to a man so cruelly and so insolently artful.

wanted not to be told, that the person who had been tricked into such a step as you had taken, must of necessity submit to many mortifications.

But were it to *me*, a girl of spirit as I am thought to be, I do assure you, I would, in a quarter of an hour, (all the time I would allow to punctilio in such a case as yours) know what he drives at: since either he must mean *well* or *ill*; if *ill*, the sooner you know it, the better; if *well*, whose modesty is it he distresses, but that of his own wife?

And methinks you should endeavour to avoid all exasperating recriminations, as to what you have heard of his failure in morals; especially while you are so happy, as not to have occasion to speak of them by experience.

I grant that it gives a worthy mind some satisfaction in having borne its testimony against the immoralities of a bad one. But that correction which is unseasonably given, is more likely either to harden or make an hypocrite, than to reclaim.

I am pleased, however, as well as you, with his making light of your brother's *wise* project.—Poor creature! and must master Jemmy Harlowe, with his half-wit, pretend to plot, and contrive mischief, yet rail at Lovelace for the same things?—A witty villain deserves hanging at once (and without ceremony, if you please:) but a half-witted one deserves broken bones first, and hanging afterwards. I think Lovelace has given his character in few words *.

Be angry at me, if you please; but as sure as you are alive, now that this poor creature, whom some call your brother, finds he has succeeded in making you fly your father's house, and that he has nothing to fear but your getting into your *own*, and into an independence of him, he thinks

* See p. 235.

himself equal to any thing, and so has a mind to fight Lovelace with his own weapons.

Don't you remember his pragmatical triumph, as told you by your aunt, and prided in by that saucy Betty Barnes, from his own foolish mouth *?

I expect nothing from your letter to your aunt, I hope Lovelace will never know the contents of it. In every one of yours, I see that he as warmly resents as he dares, the little confidence you have in him. I should resent it too, were I he; and knew I deserved better.

Don't be scrupulous about clothes, if you think of putting yourself into the protection of the ladies of his family. They know how matters stand between you and your relations, and love you never the worse for the silly people's cruelty.

I know you won't demand possession of your estate. But give *him* a right to demand it for you; and that will be still better.

Adieu, my dear! May heaven guide and direct you in all your steps, is the daily prayer of

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XLVII.

MR. BELFORD TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday, April 21.

Thou, Lovelace, hast been long the *entertainer*; I the *entertained*. Nor have I been solicitous to animadvert, as thou wentest along, upon thy inventions, and their tendency. For I believed, that with all thy airs, the unequalled perfections and fine qualities of this lady would always be her pro-

* See Vol. II. p. 331, 332, 336.

tection and security. But now that I find thou hast so far succeeded, as to induce her to come to town, and to choose her lodgings in a house, the people of which will too probably damp and suppress any honourable motions which may arise in thy mind in her favour, I cannot help writing: and that professedly in her behalf.

My inducements to this are not owing to virtue: but if they *were*, what hope could I have of affecting thee, by pleas arising from it?

Nor would such a man as thou art be deterred, were I to remind thee of the vengeance which thou mayest one day expect, if thou insultest a woman of her character, family, and fortune.

Neither are gratitude and honour motives to be mentioned in a woman's favour, to men such as we are, who consider all those of the sex as fair prize, over whom we can obtain a power. For *our honour*, and *honour*, in the *general acceptation* of the word, are two things.

What then is my motive?—What, but the true friendship that I bear thee, Lovelace; which makes me plead *thy own sake*, and *thy family's sake*, in the justice thou owest to this incomparable creature; who, however, so well deserves to have *her sake* to be mentioned as the principal consideration.

Last time I was at M. Hall, thy noble uncle so earnestly pressed me to use my interest to persuade thee to enter the pale, and gave me so many family reasons for it, that I could not help engaging myself heartily on his side of the question; and the rather as I knew, that thy own intentions with regard to this fine woman were then worthy of *her*. And of this I assured his lordship; who was half afraid of thee, because of the ill usage thou receivedst from her family. But now, that the case

is altered, let me press the matter home to thee, from other considerations.

By what I have heard of this lady's perfections from every mouth, as well as from thine, and from every letter thou hast written, where wilt thou find such another woman? And why shouldst thou tempt her virtue?—Why shouldst thou wish to try where there is no reason to doubt?

Were I in thy case, and designed to marry, and if I preferred a woman as I know thou dost this, to all the women in the world, I should dread to make further trial, knowing what *we* know of the sex, for *fear* of succeeding; and especially if I doubted not, that if there were a woman in the world virtuous at heart, it is she.

And let me tell thee, Lovelace, that in this lady's situation, the trial is not a fair trial. Considering the depth of thy plots and contrivances: considering the opportunities which I see thou must have with her, in spite of her own heart; all her relations' follies acting in concert, though unknown to themselves, with thy wicked scheming head: considering how destitute of protection she is: considering the house she is to be in, where she will be surrounded with thy implements; *specious, well-bred,* and *genteel* creatures, not easily to be detected when they are disposed to preserve appearances, especially by a young, unexperienced lady wholly unacquainted with the town: considering all these things, I say, what glory, what cause of triumph, wilt thou have, if she should be overcome?—Thou, too, a man born for intrigue, full of invention, intrepid, remorseless, able patiently to watch for thy opportunity, not hurried, as most men, by gusts of violent passion, which often nip a project in the bud, and make the snail that was just putting out his horns to meet the inviter,

withdraw into its shell—a man who has no regard to his word or oath to the sex; the lady scrupulously strict to *her* word, incapable of art or design; apt therefore to believe well of others—it would be a miracle if she stood such an attempter, such attempts, and such snares, as I see will be laid for her. And after all, I see not when men are so frail *without* importunity, that so much should be expected from women, daughters of the same fathers and mothers, and made up of the same brittle compounds, (education all the differance) nor where the triumph is in subduing them.

May there not be other Lovelaces, thou askest, who, attracted by her beauty, may endeavour to prevail with her.*?

No; there cannot, I answer, be such another man, person, mind, fortune, and thy character, as above given, taken in. If thou imaginest there could, such is thy pride, that thou wouldst think the worse of thyself.

But let me touch upon thy predominant passion, *revenge*; for *love* is but second to that, as I have often told thee, though it has set thee into raving at me: what poor pretences for revenge are the difficulties thou hadst in getter her of; allowing that she had run a risk of being Solmes's wife, had she staid? If these are other than pretences, why thankest thou not those who, by their persecutions of her, answered thy hopes, and threw her into thy power?—Besides, are not the pretences thou makest for further trial, most ingratefully, as well as *contradictorily*, founded upon the supposition of error in her, occasioned by her *favour* to thee?

And let me, for the utter confusion of thy poor

* See p. 90, 91.

pleas of this nature, ask thee—would she, in thy opinion, had she *willingly gone off with thee,* have been entitled to *better* quarter?—For a mistress indeed she might: but wouldst thou for a *wife* have had cause to like her half so well, as now?

Has she not demonstrated, that even the highest provocations were not sufficient to warp her from her duty to her parents, though a native, and, as I may say, an originally *involuntary* duty, because *native?* And is not this a charming earnest that she will sacredly observe a still higher duty into which she proposes to enter, when she does enter, by *plighted* vows, and entirely as a *volunteer?*

That she loves thee, wicked as thou art, and cruel as a panther, there is no reason to doubt. Yet, what a command has she over herself, that such a penetrating self-flatterer as thyself, art sometimes ready to doubt it! Though persecuted on the one hand, as she was, by her own family, and attracted, on the other, by the splendour of thine; every one of whom courts her to rank herself among them?

Thou wilt perhaps think, that I have departed from my proposition, and pleaded the *lady's sake* more than *thine* in the above—but no such thing. All that I have written, is more in *thy* behalf than in *hers;* since she may make *thee* happy; but it is next to impossible, I should think, if she preserve her delicacy, that thou canst make *her* so. What is the love of a rakish heart? There cannot be *peculiarity* in it. But I need not give my further reasons. Thou wilt have ingenuousness enough, I dare say, were there occasion for it, to subscribe to my opinion.

I plead not for the state from any great liking to it myself. Nor have I, at present, thoughts of entering into it. But, as thou art the last of thy

name; as thy family is of note and figure in thy country; and as thou thyself thinkest that thou shalt one day marry: is it possible, let me ask thee, that thou canst have such another opportunity as thou now hast, if thou lettest this slip? A woman, in her family and fortune, not unworthy of thine own, (though thou art so apt, from pride of ancestry, and pride of art, to speak slightly of the families thou dislikest;) so celebrated for beauty; and so noted at the same time for prudence, for *soul*, (I will say, instead of *sense*) and for virtue.

If thou art not so narrow-minded an elf, as to prefer thine own *single* satisfaction to *posterity*, thou who shouldst wish to beget children for duration, wilt not postpone till the rake's usual time; that is to say, till diseases or years, or both, lay hold of thee; since in that case thou wouldst intitle thyself to the curses of thy legitimate progeny for giving them a being altogether miserable: a being which they will be obliged to hold upon a worse tenure than that *tenant-courtesy*, which thou callest the *worst* *; to wit, upon the *doctor's courtesy*; thy descendants also propagating (if they shall live, and be able to propagate) a wretched race, that shall entail the curse, or the *reason* for it, upon remote generations.

Wicked as the sober world accounts you and me, we have not yet, it is to be hoped, got over all compunction. Although we find religion against us, we have not yet presumed to make a religion to suit our practices. We despise those who do. And we know better than to be even *doubters*. In short, we believe a future state of rewards and punishments. But as we have so much youth and health in hand, we hope to have time

* See p. 133.

for repentance. That is to say, in plain English, [nor think thou me too grave, Lovelace; *thou* art grave sometimes, though not often] we hope to live to sense, as long as sense can relish, and purpose to reform when we can sin no longer.

And shall this admirable woman suffer for her generous endeavours to set on foot thy reformation; and for insisting upon proofs of the sincerity of thy professions before she will be thine?

Upon the whole matter, let me wish thee to consider well what thou art about, before thou goest a step further in the path which thou hast chalked out for thyself to tread, and art just going to enter upon. Hitherto all is so far right, that if the lady *mistrusts* thy honour, she has no *proofs*. Be honest to her, then, in *her* sense of the word. None of thy companions, thou knowest, will offer to laugh at what *thou* dost. And if they *should*, (on thy entering into a state which has been so much ridiculed by thee, and by all of us) thou hast one advantage—it is this; that thou canst not be ashamed.

Deferring to the post-day to close my letter, I find one left at my cousin Osgood's, with direction to be forwarded to the lady. It was brought within these two hours by a particular hand, and has a Harlowe seal upon it. As it may therefore be of importance, I dispatch it with my own, by my servant, post haste *.

I suppose you will soon be in town. Without the lady, I hope. Farewell.

Be honest, and be happy,

Sat. April 22. J. BELFORD.

* This Letter was from Miss Arabella Harlowe. See Let. li.

LETTER XLVIII.

MRS. HERVEY TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In Answer to Letter* xlv.]

DEAR NIECE,

It would be hard not to write a few lines, so much pressed to write, to one I ever loved. Your former letter I received; yet was not at liberty to answer it. I break my word to answer you now.

Strange informations are every day received about you. The wretch you are with, we are told, is every hour triumphing and defying—must not these informations aggravate? You know the uncontrollableness of the man. He loves his own humour better than he loves you—though so fine a creature as you are! I warned you over and over: no young lady was ever more warned!—Miss Clarissa Harlowe to do such a thing!

You might have given your friends the meeting. If you had *held* your aversion, it would have been complied with. As soon as I was entrusted myself with their *intention* to give up the point, I gave you a hint—a dark one perhaps *—but who would have thought—O Miss:—such an *artful* flight!—Such *cunning* preparation!

But you want to clear up things—*what* can you clear up? Are you not gone off?—With a Lovelace too? *What,* my dear, would you clear up?

You did not *design* to go, you say. Why did you meet him then, chariot-and-six, horsemen, all prepared by him? O my dear, how art produces art!—Will it be believed?—If it *would,* what power will he be thought to have had over you!—

* See Vol. II. p. 333, 334.

He—who?—*Lovelace!*—the vilest of libertines! —Over whom?—A *Clasissa!*—Was your love for such a man above your reason? Above your resolution? What credit would a belief of this, *if* believed, bring you?—How mend the matter?—Oh! that you had stood the next meeting!

I'll tell you all that was intended if you had.

It was, indeed, imagined, that you would not have been able to resist your father's entreaties and commands. He was resolved to be all condescension, if anew you had not provoked him. *I love my Clary Harlowe,* said he, but an hour before the killing tidings were brought him; *I love her as my life: I will kneel to her, if nothing else will do, to prevail upon her to oblige me.*

Your father and mother (the reverse of what should have been!) would have humbled themselves to *you:* and if you could have denied them, and refused to sign the settlements previous to the meeting, they would have yielded, although with regret.

But it was presumed, so naturally sweet your temper, so self-denying, as they thought you, that you could *not* have withstood them, notwithstanding all your dislike of the *one* man, without a greater degree of headstrong passion for the *other,* than you had given any of us reason to expect from you.

If you *had,* the meeting on Wednesday would have been a lighter trial to you. You would have been presented to all your assembled friend, with a short speech only, 'that this was the young creature, till very lately faultless, condescending, and obliging; now having cause to glory in a triumph over the wills of father, mother, uncles, the most indulgent; over family interests, family views; and preferring her own will to every

body's; and this for a transitory preference to *person* only; there being no comparison between the men as to their *morals*'.

Thus complied with and perhaps blessed, by your father and mother, and the consequences of your disobedience deprecated in the solemnest manner by your inimitable mother, your *generosity* would have been appealed to, since your duty would have been found too weak an inducement, and you would have been bid to withdraw for one half-hour's consideration: then would the settlements have been again tendered for your signing, by the person least disobliging to you; by your good Norton perhaps; she perhaps seconded by your father again: and, if again refused, you would again have been led in, to declare such your refusal. Some restrictions, which you yourself had proposed, would have been insisted upon. You would have been permitted to go home with me, or with your uncle Antony (with *which* of us was not agreed upon, because they hoped you might be persuaded) there to stay till the arrival of your cousin Morden; or till your father could have borne to see you; or till assured, that the views of Lovelace were at an end.

This the intention, your father so set upon your compliance, so much in hopes that you would have yielded, that you would have been prevailed upon by methods so condescending and so gentle; no wonder that *he*, in particular, was like a distracted man, when he heard of your flight—of your flight so *premeditated*; —with your ivy summer-house dinings, your arts to blind me, and all of us!—naughty, naughty young creature!

I, for my part, would not believe it, when told of it. Your uncle Hervey would not believe it. We rather expected, we rather feared, a still more

desperate adventure. There could be but one more desperate; and I was readier to have the cascade first resorted to, than the garden back-door.—Your mother fainted away, while her heart was torn between the two apprehensions.—Your father, poor man! your father was beside himself for near an hour—what imprecations!—what dreadful imprecations!—To this day he can hardly bear your name: yet can think of nobody else. Your merits, my dear, but aggravate your fault.—Something of fresh aggravation every hour—how can any favour be expected?

I am sorry for it; but am afraid nothing you ask will be complied with.

Why mention you, my dear, the saving you from mortifications, who have gone off with a man? What a poor pride is it to stand upon any thing else?

I dare not open my lips in your favour. Nobody dare. Your letter must stand by itself. This has caused me to send it to Harlowe Place. Expect therefore great severity. May you be enabled to support the lot you have drawn! O my dear! how unhappy have you made every body! Can *you* expect to be happy? Your father wishes you had never been born. Your poor mother—but why should I afflict you? There is now no help!—You must be changed, indeed, if you are not very unhappy yourself in the reflections your thoughtful mind must suggest to you.

You must now make the best of your lot. Yet *not* married it seems!

It is in your power, you say, to perform whatever you shall undertake to do. You may deceive yourself: you hope that your reputation and the favour of your friends may be retrieved. Never, never, both, I doubt; if either. Every offended

person (and that is all who loved you, and are related to you) must *join* to restore you: when can these be of *one* mind in a case so notoriously wrong?

It would be very grievous, you say, to be precipitated upon measures, that may make the desirable reconciliation more difficult. Is it *now*, my dear, a time for you to be afraid of being *precipitated*? At *present*, if *ever*, there can be no thought of reconciliation. The *upshot* of your precipitation must first be seen. There may be murder yet as far as we know. Will the man you are with part willingly with you? If *not*, what may be the consequence? If he *will*—Lord bless me! what shall we think of his reasons for it?—I will fly this thought. I know your purity—but, my dear, are you not out of all protection?—Are you not unmarried?—Have you not (making your daily prayers useless) thrown yourself into temptation? And is not the man the most wicked of plotters?

You have hitherto, you say (and I think, my dear, with an air unbecoming your declared penitence) *no fault to find with the behaviour of a man from whom every evil was apprehended*: like Cæsar to the Roman augur, who had bid him *beware of the ides of March*: *The ides of March*, said Cæsar, seeing the augur among the crowd, as he marched in state to the senate-house, from which he never was to return alive, *the Ides of March are come. But they are not past*, the augur replied. Make the application, my dear: may you be able to make this reflection upon his good behaviour to the last of your knowledge of him! May he behave himself better to you, than he ever did to any body else over whom he had power! Amen!

No answer, I beseech you. I hope your messenger will not tell any body that I have written to

you. And I dare say you will not show this letter to Mr. Lovelace—for I have written with the less reserve, depending upon your prudence.

You have my prayers.

My Dolly knows not that I write. Nobody does *: not even Mr. Hervey.

Dolly would have several times written: but having defended your fault with heat, and with a partiality that alarmed us [such a fall as your's, my dear, must be alarming to all parents] she has been forbidden, on pain of losing our favour for ever: and this at your family's request, as well as by her father's commands. You have the poor girl's hourly prayers, I will, however, tell you, though she knows not that I do, as well as those of

Your truly afflicted aunt,

Friday, April 21. D. HERVEY.

LETTER XLIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

With the preceding.

Sat. morn. April 22.

I HAVE just now received the enclosed from my aunt Hervey. Be pleased, my dear, to keep her secret of having written to the unhappy wretch her neice.

I may go to London, I see, or where I will. No matter what becomes of me.

I was the willinger to suspend my journey thither, till I heard from Harlowe Place. I thought if I could be encouraged to hope for a reconci-

* Notwithstanding what Mrs. Hervey here says, it will be hereafter seen that this severe Letter of hers was written in private concert with the implacable Arabella.

liation, I would let this man see, that he should not have me in his power, but upon my own terms if at all.

But I find I must be *his*, whether I will or not; and perhaps through still greater mortifications than those great ones which I have already met with—and must I be so absolutely thrown upon a man, with whom I am not at all satisfied?

My letter is sent, you see, to Harlowe Place. My heart aches for the reception it may meet with there.

One comfort only arises to me from its being sent; that my aunt will clear *herself* by the communication, from the supposition of having corresponded with the poor creature whom they have all determined to reprobate. It is no small part of my misfortune that I have weakened the confidence one dear friend has in another, and made one look cool upon another. My poor cousin Dolly, you see, has reason for regret on this account, as well as my aunt. Miss Howe, my dear Miss Howe, is but too sensible of the effects of my fault having had more words with her mother on my account, than ever she had on any other. Yet the man who has drawn me into all this evil, I must be thrown upon!—Much did I consider, much did I apprehend, *before* my fault, supposing I *were* to be guilty of it: but I saw it not in all its shocking lights.

And now, to know that my father, an hour before he received the tidings of my supposed flight, owned that he loved me as his life; that he would have been all condescension; that he would—Oh! my dear, how tender, how mortifyingly tender now in him! My aunt need not have been afraid, that it should be known that she has sent me such a letter as this!—A father to kneel to his child!—There would not indeed have been

any bearing of that!—What I should have done in such a case, I know not. Death would have been much more welcome to me than such a sight, on such an occasion, in behalf of a man so very, very disgustful to me!—But I had deserved annihilation, had I suffered my father to kneel in vain.

Yet, had but the sacrifice of *inclination* and *personal preference* been *all*, less than KNEELING should have done. My *duty* should have been the conqueror of my *inclination*. But an aversion—an aversion so *very* sincere!—The triumph of a cruel and ambitious brother, ever so uncontroulable, joined with the insults of an envious sister, bringing wills to *theirs*, which otherwise would have been favourable to *me*: the marriage duties, so absolutely indispensable, so solemnly to be engaged for: the marriage intimacies [permit me to say to you my friend, what the purest, although with apprehension, must think of] so *very* intimate: myself one, who never looked upon any duty, much less a voluntary vowed one, with indifference; could it have been honest in me to have given my hand to an odious hand, and to have consented to such a more than reluctant, such an *immiscible* union, if I may so call it?—For life too!—Did not I *think* more and deeper than most young creatures think; did I not *weigh*, did I not *reflect*; I might perhaps have been less obstinate—*delicacy*, (may I presume to call it?) *thinking*, *weighing*, *reflection*, are not blessings (I have not found them such) in the degree I have them. I wish I had been able, in some very nice cases, to have known what *indifference* was; yet not to have my *ignorance* imputable to me as a fault. Oh! my dear! the finer sensibilities, if I may suppose mine to be such, make not happy!

What a method had my friends intended to take

with me? This, I dare say, was a method chalked out by my brother. *He*, I suppose, was to have presented me to all my assembled friends, as the daughter capable of preferring her own will to the wills of them all. It would have been a sore trial, no doubt. Would to heaven, however, I had stood it—let the issue have been what it would, would to heaven I had stood it!

There may be murder, my aunt says. This looks as if she knew of Singleton's rash plot. Such an *upshot*, as *she* calls it, of this unhappy affair, heaven avert!

She flies a thought, that I can *less* dwell upon—a *cruel* thought—but she has a poor opinion of the purity she compliments me with, if she thinks that I am not, by GOD's grace, above temptation, from this sex. Although I never saw a man, whose *person* I could like, before this man; yet his faulty character allowed me but little merit from the indifference I pretended to on his account. But now, I see him *in nearer lights*, I like him less than ever. Unpolite, cruel, insolent!—Unwise! A trifler with his own happiness; the destroyer of mine!—His last treatment—*my fate too visibly in his power—master of his own wishes* [shame to say it] *if he knew what to wish for.*—Indeed I never liked him so little as now. Upon my word, I think I could hate him (if I do not already hate him) sooner than any man I ever thought tolerably of—a good reason why: because I have been more disappointed in my expectations of him; although they never were so high, *as to have made him my choice in preference to the single life, had that been permitted me.* Still, if the giving him up for ever will make my path to reconciliation easy, and if they will signify as much to me, they shall see that I never will be

his: for I have the vanity to think my soul his soul's superior.

You will say I rave: forbidden to write to my aunt, and taught to despair of reconciliation, you, my dear, must be troubled with my passionate resentments. What a wretch was I to give him a meeting, since by that I put it out of my power to meet my assembled friends!—All would now, if I had met them, have been over; and who can tell when my present distresses will?—Rid of both men, I had been now perhaps at my aunt Hervey's or at my uncle Antony's; wishing for my cousin Morden's arrival; who might have accommodated all.

I *intended*, indeed, to have stood it; and, if I had, how know I by whose name I might now have been called? For how should I have resisted a condescending, a *kneeling* father, had he been able to have kept his temper with me?

Yet my aunt says, he would have relented, if *I* had not. Perhaps he would have been moved by my humility, before he could have shown such *undue* condescension. Such temper as he would have received me with might have been improved upon in my favour. And that he had designed *ultimately* to relent, how it clears my friends (at least to themselves) and condemns me! O why were my aunt's hints [I remember them now] so very dark? —Yet I intended to have returned after the interview; and then perhaps she would have explained herself.—O this artful, this designing Lovelace!—Yet I must repeat, that most ought I to blame myself for meeting him.

But far, far be banished from me fruitless recrimination! Far banished, *because* fruitless! Let me wrap myself about in the mantle of my own inte-

grity, and take comfort in my unfaulty intention! Since it is now too late to look back, let me collect all my fortitude, and endeavour to stand those shafts of angry Providence, which it will not permit me to shun! That, whatever the trials may be, which I am destined to undergo, I may not behave unworthily in them; and may come out amended by them.

Join with me in this prayer, my beloved friend; for your own honour's sake, as well as for love's sake, join with me in it: lest a deviation on my side should, with the censorious, cast a shade upon a friendship which has no levity in it; and the basis of which is improvement, as well in the greater as lesser duties.

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER L.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Sunday afternoon, April 23.

O MY best, my *only* friend! now indeed is my heart broken! it has received a blow it never will recover. Think not of corresponding with a wretch who now seems absolutely devoted. How can it be otherwise, if a parent's curses have the weight I always attributed to them, and have heard so many instances in confirmation of that weight!—Yes, my dear Miss Howe, superadded to all my afflictions, I have the consequences of a father's curse to struggle with! How shall I support this reflection!—my past and my present situation so much authorizing my apprehensions!

I have, at last, a letter from my unrelenting sister. Would to heaven I had not provoked it by my se-

cond letter to my aunt Hervey! It lay ready for me, it seems. The thunder slept till I awakened it. I inclose the letter itself. Transcribe it I cannot. There is no bearing the thoughts of it: for [shocking reflection!] the curse extends to the life beyond this.

I am in the depth of vapourish despondency. I can only repeat, shun, fly, correspond not with a wretch so devoted as

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LI.

TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

To be left at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square.

Friday, April 21.

It was *expected* you would send again to me, or to my aunt Hervey. The inclosed has lain ready for you therefore by direction. You will have no answer from any body, write to *whom* you will, and as *often* as you will, and *what* you will.

It was designed to bring you back by proper authority, or to send you whither the disgraces you have brought upon us all should be in the likeliest way, after a while, to be forgotten. But I believe that design is over: so you may *range* securely—nobody will think it worth while to give themselves any trouble about you. Yet my mother has obtained leave to send you your clothes of all sorts: but your clothes only. This is a favour you'll see by the within letter not *designed* you: and *now* not granted for your sake, but because my poor mother cannot bear in her sight any thing you used to wear. Read the inclosed, and tremble.

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

TO THE MOST UNGRATEFUL AND UNDUTIFUL OF DAUGHTERS.

SISTER THAT WAS! Harlowe Place, April 15.

For I know not what name you are *permitted*, or *choose* to go by.

You have filled us all with distraction. My father, in the first agitations of his mind, on discovering your wicked, your shameful elopement, imprecated on his knees a fearful curse upon you. Tremble at the recital of it!—No less, than 'that you may meet your punishment both *here* and *hereafter*, by means of the very wretch, in whom you have chosen to place your wicked confidence.'

Your clothes will not be sent you. You seem, by leaving them behind you, to have been secure of them, whenever you demanded them, but perhaps you could think of nothing but meeting your fellow: nothing but how to get off with your forward self!—For every thing seems to have been forgotten but what was to contribute to your wicked flight—yet you judged right, perhaps, that you would have been detected, had you endeavoured to get away your clothes.—Cunning creature! not to make one step that we could guess at you by! Cunning to effect your own ruin, and the disgrace of all the family!

But does the wretch put you upon writing for your things, for fear you should be too expensive to him?—That's it, I suppose.

Was there ever a giddier creature!—Yet this is the celebrated, the blazing Clarissa—Clarissa *what? Harlowe*, no doubt!—And Harlowe it will be, to the disgrace of us all!

Your drawings and your pieces are all taken down; as is also your own whole-length picture,

in the Vandyke taste, from your late parlour: they are taken down, and thrown into your closet, which will be nailed up, as if it were not a part of the house; there to perish together: for who can bear to see them? Yet, how did they use to be shown to every body; the former, for the magnifying of your dainty finger works; the latter, for the imputed dignity (dignity now in the dust!) of your boasted figure; and this by those fond parents from whom you have run away with so *much*, yet with so *little* contrivance!

My brother vows revenge upon your libertine—for the *family's sake* he vows it—not for *yours!*—For he will treat you, he declares, like a common creature, if ever he sees you: and doubts not that this will be your fate.

My uncle Harlowe renounces you for ever.

So does my uncle Antony.

So does my aunt Hervey.

So do *I*, base unworthy creature! the disgrace of a good family, and the property of an infamous rake, as questionless you will soon find yourself, if you are not already.

Your books, since they have not taught you what belongs to your family, to your sex, and to your education, will not be sent you. Your money neither. Nor yet the jewels so undeservedly made yours. For it is wished you may be seen a beggar along London streets.

If all this is heavy, lay your hand to your heart, and ask yourself why you have deserved it?

Every man whom your pride taught you to reject with scorn (Mr. Solmes excepted, who, however has reason to rejoice that he missed you) triumphs in your shameful elopement; and now knows how to account for his being refused.

Your worthy Norton is ashamed of you, and min-

gles her tears with your mother's; both reproaching themselves for their shares in you, and in so fruitless an education.

Every body, in short, is ashamed of you: but none more than

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

LETTER LII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Tuesday, April 25.

Be comforted; be not dejected; do not despond, my dearest and best beloved friend. God Almighty is just and gracious, and gives not his assent to rash and inhuman curses. Can you think that heaven will seal to the black passions of its depraved creatures? If it did, malice, envy, and revenge would triumph; and the best of the human race, blasted by the malignity of the worst, would be miserable in both worlds.

This outrageousness shows only what manner of spirit they are of, and how much their sordid views exceed their parental love. 'Tis all owing to rage and disappointment — disappointment in designs proper to be frustrated.

If you consider this malediction as it ought to be considered, a person of your piety must and will rather pity and pray for your *rash father* than terrify *yourself* on the occasion. None but God can curse. Parents, or others, whoever they be, can only pray to him to curse: and such prayers can have no weight with a just and all-perfect being, the motives to which are unreasonable, and the end proposed by them cruel.

Has not God commanded us *to bless and curse*

not? Pray for your father then, I repeat, that he incur not the malediction he has announced on you; since he has broken, as you see, a command truly divine; while you, by obeying that other precept, which enjoins us *to pray for them that persecute and curse us,* will turn the curse into a blessing.

My mother blames them for this wicked letter of your sister; and she pities you; and, of her own accord, wished me to write to comfort you, for this once: for she says it is pity your heart, which was so noble (and when the sense of your fault, and the weight of a parent's curse, are so strong upon you) should be quite broken.

Lord bless me, how your aunt writes!—Can there be two rights and two wrongs in palpable cases!—But, my dear, she *must* be wrong: so they all have been, justify themselves now as they will. They can only justify themselves *to* themselves from selfish principles, resolving to *acquit,* not fairly to *try* themselves. Did your unkind aunt, in all the tedious progress of your contentions with them, give you the least hope of their relenting?—Her dark hints now I recollect, as well as you. But why was any thing good or hopeful to be darkly hinted?—How easy was it for *her,* who pretended always to love you; for *her,* who can give such flowing licence to her pen for your hurt; to have given you one word, one line (in confidence) of their pretended change of measures!

But do not mind their after-pretences, my dear—all of them serve but for tacit confessions of their vile usage of you. I will keep your aunt's secret, never fear. I would not, on any consideration, that my mother should see her letter.

You will now see, that you have nothing left, but to overcome all scrupulousness, and marry as

soon as you have an opportunity. Determine so to do, my dear.

I will give you a motive for it, regarding myself. For this I have resolved, and this I have vowed [O friend, the best beloved of my heart, be not angry with me for it]! 'That so long as your happiness is in suspense, I will never think of marrying.' In justice to the man I shall have I have vowed this: for, my dear, must I not be miserable if you are so? And what an unworthy wife must I be to any man who cannot have interest enough in my heart to make his obligingness a balance for an affliction he has not caused?

I would show Lovelace your sister's abominable letter, were it to me. I inclose it. It shall not have a place in this house. This will enter him of course into the subject which you now ought to have most in view. Let him see what you suffer for him. He cannot prove base to such an excellence. I should never enjoy my head or my senses should this man prove a villain to you!—With a merit so exalted, you may have punishment more than enough for your involuntary fault in that husband.

I would not have you be too sure that their project to seize you is over. The words intimating that it *is* over, in the letter of that abominable Arabella, seem calculated to give you security.—She only says, she *believes* that design is over.—And I do not yet find from Miss Lloyd that it is disavowed. So it will be best, when you are in London, to be private, and, for fear of the worst, to let every direction be to a *third-place*; for I would not, for the world, have you fall into the hands of such flaming and malevolent spirits by surprise.

I will myself be content to direct to you at *some third-place*; and I shall then be able to aver to my

mother, or to any other, if occasion be, *that I know not where you are.*

Besides, this measure will make you less apprehensive of the consequences of their violence should they resolve to attempt to carry you off in spite of Lovelace.

I would have you direct to Mr. Hickman, even your answer to this. I have a reason for it. Besides, my mother, notwithstanding this particular indulgence, is very positive. They have prevailed upon her, I know, to give her word to this purpose—spiteful poor wretches! How I hate in particular your foolish uncle Antony.

I would not have your thoughts dwell on the contents of your sister's shocking letter; but pursue other subjects—the subjects before you. And let me know your progress with Lovelace, and what he says to this diabolical curse. So far you may enter into this hateful subject. I expect that this will aptly introduce the grand topic between you, without needing a mediator.

Come, my dear, when things are at worst they will mend. Good often comes when evil is expected.—But if you despond, there can be no hopes of cure. Don't let them break your heart; for that it is plain to me is now what some people have in view to do.

How poor to withhold from you your books, your jewels, and your money! As money is all you can at present want, since they will vouchsafe to send your clothes, I send fifty guineas by the bearer, inclosed in single papers in my *Norris's Miscellanies.* I charge you, as you love me return them not.

I have more at your service. So if you like not your lodgings or his behaviour when you get to town, leave both them and him directly.

I would advise you to write to Mr. Morden without delay. If he intends for England, it may hasten him. And you will do very well till he can come. But surely Lovelace will be infatuated, if he secure not his happiness by *your consent*, before that of Mr. Morden's is made needful on his arrival.

Once more, my dear, let me beg of you to be comforted. Manage with your usual prudence the stake before you, and all will still be happy. Suppose yourself to be *me*, and me to be *you* [you *may*—for your distress is mine]; and then you will add full day to these but glimmering lights which are held out to you by

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

I hurry this away by Robert. I will enquire into the truth of your aunt's pretences about the change of measures which she says they intended in case you had not gone away.

LETTER LIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Wednesday morning, April 26.

Your letter, my beloved Miss Howe, gives me great comfort. How sweetly do I experience the truth of the wise man's observation, *That a faithful friend is the medicine of life!*

Your messenger finds me just setting out for London: the chaise at the door. Already I have taken leave of the good widow, who has obliged me with the company of her eldest daughter, at Mr. Lovelace's request, while he rides by us. The

young gentlewoman is to return in two or three days with the chaise, in its way to my Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat.

I received my sister's dreadful letter on Sunday, when Mr. Lovelace was out. He saw, on his return, my *extreme anguish and dejection;* and he was told *how much worse I had been:* for I had fainted away more than once.

I think the contents of it have touched my head as well as my heart.

He would fain have seen it. But I would not permit that, because of the threatenings he would have found in it against himself. As it *was*, the effect it had upon me, made him break out into execrations and menaces. I was so ill, that he himself advised me to delay going to town on Monday, as I proposed to do.

He is extremely regardful and tender of me. All that you supposed *would* follow this violent letter, from him, *has* followed it. He has offered himself to my acceptance in so unreserved a manner, that I am concerned I have written so freely and so diffidently of him. Pray, my dearest friend, keep to yourself every thing that may appear disreputable of him from me.

I must acquaint you, that his kind behaviour, and my low-spiritedness, co-operating with your former advice, and my unhappy situation, made me the very Sunday evening *receive unreservedly his declarations:* and now indeed I am more in his power than ever.

He presses me every hour [indeed as *needlessly* as *unkindly*] for fresh tokens of my esteem *for* him, and confidence in him. And, as I have been brought to *some verbal concessions,* if he should prove unworthy, I am sure I shall have great reason to blame this violent letter: for I have no reso-

lution at all. Abandoned thus of all my natural friends, of whose returning favour I have now no hopes, and only you to pity me, and *you* restrained, as I may say, I have been forced to turn my desolate heart to such protection as I could find.

All my comfort is, that your advice repeatedly given to the same purpose, in your kind letter before me, warrants me. I now set out the more cheerfully to London on that account: for before a heavy weight hung upon my heart! and although I thought it best and safest to go, yet my spirits sunk, I know not why, at every motion I made towards a preparation for it.

I hope no mischief will happen on the road.—I hope these violent spirits will not meet.

Every one is waiting for me.—Pardon me, my best, my kindest friend, that I return your Norris. In these more promising prospects, I cannot have occasion for your favour. Besides, I have some hope, that with my clothes they will send me the money I wrote for, although it is denied me in the letter. If they do not, and if I should have occasion, I can but signify my wants to so ready a friend. And I have promised to be obliged only to you. But I had rather methinks you should have it *still to say*, if challenged, that nothing of this nature has been either requested or done. I say this, with a view entirely to my future hopes of recovering your mother's favour, which, next to that of my own father and mother, I am most solicitous to recover.

I must acquaint you with one thing more, notwithstanding my hurry; and that is, that Mr. Lovelace offered either to attend me to Lord M.'s, or to send for his chaplain, yesterday. He pressed me to consent to this proposal most earnestly; and even seemed desirous rather to have the ceremony

pass here than in London: for when there, I had told him, it was time enough to consider of so weighty and important a matter. Now, upon the receipt of your kind, your consolatory letter, methinks I could almost wish it had been *in my power* to comply with his earnest solicitations. But this dreadful letter *has unhinged my whole frame.* Then some *little punctilio* surely is necessary. No preparation made. No articles drawn. No licence ready. Grief so extreme: no pleasure in prospect, nor so much as in wish—O, my dear, who could think of entering into so solemn an engagement? Who, *so* unprepared, could seem to be *so* ready?

If I could flatter myself that my indifference to all the joys of this life proceeded from *proper* motives, and not rather from the disappointments and mortifications my pride has met with, how much rather, I think, should I choose to be wedded to my shroud, than to any man on earth!

Indeed I have at present no pleasure but in *your* friendship. Continue that to me, I beseech you. If my heart rises hereafter to a capacity of more, it must be built on that foundation.

My spirits sink again, on setting out. Excuse this depth of vapourish dejection, which forbids me even *hope*, the cordial that keeps life from stagnating, and which never was denied me till within these eight-and-forty hours.

But 'tis time to relieve you.

Adieu, my best beloved and kindest friend! Pray for your

CLARISSA.

LETTER LIV.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday, April 27.

I AM sorry you sent back my Norris. But you must be allowed to do as you please. So must I, in my turn. We must neither of us perhaps expect absolutely of the other what is the rightest to be done: and yet few folks, so young as we are, *better* know *what that rightest is*. I cannot separate myself from you, although I give a double instance of my vanity in joining myself with you in this particular assertion.

I am most heartily rejoiced that your prospects are so much mended; and that, as I hoped, good has been produced out of evil. What must the man have been, what must have been his views, had he not taken such a turn, upon a letter so vile, and upon a treatment so unnatural; himself principally the occasion of it?

You *know best* your *motives* for suspending: but I wish you *could* have taken him at offers so earnest *. Why should you not have permitted him to send for Lord M.'s chaplain? If punctilio only was in the way, and want of a licence, and of proper preparations, and such like, my service to you, my dear: and there is ceremony tantamount to your ceremony.

Do not, do not, my dear friend, *again* be so very

* Mr. Lovelace, in his next letter, tells his friend how extremely ill the lady was; recovering from fits to fall into stronger fits, and nobody expecting her life. She has not, he says, acquainted Miss Howe how *very* ill she was. In p. 301 she tells Miss Howe, that her motives for suspending were not *merely ceremonious* ones.

melancholy a decliner, as to prefer a shroud, when the matter you wish for is in your power; and when, as you have justly said heretofore, persons *cannot die when they will.*

But it is a strange perverseness in human nature, that we slight that when near us, which at a distance we wish for.

You have now but one point to pursue: that is marriage: let that be solmnized. Leave the rest to Providence; and, to use your own words in a former letter, follow as that leads. You will have a handsome man; a genteel man; he would be a *wise* man, if he were not vain of his endowments, and wild and intriguing: but while the eyes of many of our sex, taken by so specious a form and so brilliant a spirit, encourage that vanity, you must be contented to stay till grey hairs and prudence enter upon the stage together. You would not have every thing in the same man.

I believe Mr. Hickman treads no crooked paths; but he hobbles most ungracefully in a straight one. Yet Mr. Hickman, though he *pleases* not my eye, nor *diverts* my ear, will not, as I believe, *disgust* the one nor *shock* the other. Your man, as I have lately said, will always keep up attention; you will always be alive with him, though perhaps more from fears than hopes: while Mr. Hickman will neither say any thing to keep one awake, nor yet by shocking adventures make one's slumbers uneasy.

I believe I now know which of the two men so prudent a person as *you* would, at first, have chosen; nor doubt I, that you can guess which *I* would have made choice of, if I might. But proud as we are, the proudest of us all can *only* refuse, and many of us accept the but half-worthy, for fear a still worse should offer.

If the men had chosen their mistresses for spirits like their own, although Mr. Lovelace, at the long run, might have been *too many for me,* I don't doubt but I should have given heart-ake for heart-ake, for one half-year at least: while you, with my dull-swift, would have glided on *as* serenely, *as* calmly, *as* accountably, as the succeeding seasons; and varying no otherwise than they, to bring on new beauties and conveniences to all about you.

* * *

I was going on in this style—but my mother broke in upon me, with a prohibitory aspect. 'She gave me leave for one letter only.'—She had just parted with your odious uncle; and they have been in close conference again.

She has vexed me. I must lay this by till I hear from you again; not knowing whither to send it.

Direct me to a *third place,* as I desired in my former.

I told my mother, (on her challenging me) that I was writing indeed, and to you: but it was only to amuse myself: for I protested *that I knew not where to send to you.*

I hope that your next may inform me of your nuptials, although the next to that were to acquaint me that he was the ungratefullest monster on earth, as he must be if not the kindest husband in it.

My mother has vexed me. But so, on revising, I wrote before—but she has *unhinged me,* as you call it: pretended to catechise Hickman, I assure you, for contributing to our supposed correspondence. Catechised him *severely* too, upon my word!—I believe I have a sneaking kindness for the sneaking fellow; for I cannot endure that any body should treat him like a fool but myself.

I believe, between you and me, the good lady forgot herself. I heard her loud. She possibly

imagined that my father was come to life again. Yet the meekness of the man might have soon convined her, I should have thought; for my father, it seems, would talk as loud as she, I suppose, (though within a few yards of each other) as if both were out of their way, and were hallooing at half a mile's distance to get in again.

I know you'll blame me for this sauciness—but I told you I was vexed: and if I had not a spirit, my parentage on both sides might be doubted.

You must not chide me too severely, however, because I have learned of you not to defend myself in an error: and I own I am wrong: and that's enough: you won't be so generous in this case as you are in every other if you don't think it is.

Adieu, my dear! I must, I will love you; and love you for ever! So subscribes your

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LV.

FROM MISS HOWE.

Inclosed in the above.

Thursday, April 27.

I HAVE been making inquiry, as I told you I would, whether your relations had really (before you left them) resolved upon that change of measures which your aunt mentions in her letter; and by laying together several pieces of intelligence, some drawn from my mother, through your uncle Antony's communications; some from Miss Lloyd, by your sister's; and some by a third way, that I shall not tell you of; I have reason to think the following a true state of the case.

'That there was no intention of a change of measures, till within two or three days of your going away. On the contrary, your brother and sister, though they had no hope of prevailing with you in Solmes's favour, were resolved never to give over their persecutions till they had pushed you upon taking some step, which, by help of *their good offices,* should be deemed inexcusable by the half-witted souls they had to play upon.

'But that at last your mother (tired with, and perhaps, ashamed of the passive part she had acted) thought fit to declare to Miss Bell, that she was determined to try to put an end to the family feuds; and to get your uncle Harlowe to second her endeavours.

'This alarmed your brother and sister; and then a change of measures was resolved upon. Solmes's offers were however too advantageous to be given up; and your father's condescension was now to be their sole dependence, and (as *they* give it out) the trying of what that would do with you, their last effort.'

And, indeed, my dear, this must have succeeded, I verily think, with such a daughter as they had to deal with, could that father, who never, I dare say, kneeled in his life but to his God, have so far condescended as your aunt writes he would.

But then, my dear, what would this have done?—Perhaps you would have given Lovelace the *meeting,* in hopes to pacify him, and prevent mischief; supposing that they had given you time, and not hurried you directly into the state. But if you had *not* met him, you see, that he was resolved to visit them, and well attended too: and what must have been the consequence?

So that, upon the whole, we know not but mat-

ters may be best as they *are*, however disagreeable that *best* is.

I hope your considerate and thoughtful mind will make a good use of this hint. Who would not with patience sustain even a great evil, if she could persuade herself, that it was kindly dispensed, in order to prevent a *still* greater?—Especially, if she could sit down, as you can, and acquit her own heart!

Permit me one further observation—do we not see, from the above state of the matter, what might have been done before, *by the worthy person* of your family, had she exerted the *mother*, in behalf of a child so meritorious, yet so much oppressed?

Adieu, my dear. I will be ever yours,

ANNA HOWE.

Clarissa, in her answer to the first of the two last letters, chides her friend for giving so little weight to her advice, in relation to her behaviour to her mother. It may be proper to insert here the following extracts from that answer; though a little before the time.

You assume, my dear, *says she,* your usual, and ever-agreeable style, in what you write of the two gentlemen, and how unaptly you think they have chosen; Mr. Hickman in addressing you; Mr. Lovelace me. But I am inclinable to believe, that with a view to happiness, however two mild tempers might agree, two high ones would make sad work of it, both at one time violent and unyielding. You two might indeed have raqueted the ball betwixt you, as you say. But Mr. Hickman, by his gentle manners, seems formed for you, if you go not too far with him. If you do, it would be a

tameness in him to bear it, which would make a man more contemptible than Mr. Hickman can ever deserve to be made. Nor is it a disgrace for even a brave man, who knows what a woman is to vow to him *afterwards,* to be very obsequious *beforehand.*

Do you think it is to the credit of Mr. Lovelace's character, that he can be offensive and violent?—Does he not, as all such spirits must, subject himself to the necessity of making submissions for his excesses, far more mortifying to a proud heart than those condescensions which the high-spirited are so apt to impute as a weakness of mind in such a man as Mr. Hickman?

Let me tell you, my dear, that Mr. Hickman is such a one, as would rather bear an affront *from a* lady, than offer one *to* her. He had rather, I dare say, that she should have occasion to ask *his* pardon, than he *hers.* But, my dear, *you have outlived your first passion;* and had the second man been an angel he would not have been more than indifferent to you.

My motives for suspending, *proceeds she,* were not *merely ceremonious ones.* I was really very ill. I could not hold up my head. The contents of my sister's letters had pierced my heart. Indeed, my dear, I was *very* ill. And was I, moreover, to be as ready to accept his offer, as if I were afraid *he never would repeat it?*

I see with great regret that your mamma is still immoveably bent against our correspondence. What shall I do about it?—It goes against me to continue it, or to wish you to favour me with returns.—Yet I have so managed my matters, that I have no friend but you to advise with. It is enough to make one indeed wish to be married to this man, though a man of errors; as he has worthy

relations of my own sex; and I should have some friends, I hope:—and having *some*, I might have *more*—for as money is said to increase money, so does the countenance of persons of character increase friends; while the destitute *must* be destitute.—It goes against my heart to beg of you to discontinue corresponding with me; and yet it is against my conscience to carry it on against parental prohibition. But I dare not use all the arguments against it that I could use—and why?—For fear I should convince you; and you should reject me as the rest of my frends have done. I leave therefore the determination of this point upon you.—I am not, I find, to be trusted with it. But be *mine* all the fault, and all the punishment, if it be punishable!—And certainly it must, when it can be the cause of those over lively sentences wherewith you conclude the letter I have before me, and which I must no further animadvert upon, because you forbid me to do so.

To the second letter, among other things, she says,

So, my dear, you seem to think, that there was a *fate* in my error. The cordial, the considerate friend, is seen in the observation you make on this occasion. Yet since things have happened as they have, would to Heaven I could hear, that all the world acquitted my father, or at least, my mother! whose character, before these family feuds broke out, was the subject of every one's admiration. Don't let any body say from you, so that it may come to *her* ear, that she might, by a timely exertion of her fine talents, have saved her unhappy child. You will observe, my dear, that *in her own good time*, when she saw that there was not likely to be an end to my brother's persecutions, she resolved to exert herself. But the pragmatical daughter, *by*

the fatal meeting, precipitated all, and frustrated her indulgent designs. O my love, I am now convinced, by dear experience, that while children are so happy as to have parents or guardians, whom they *may* consult, they should not presume (no, not with the best and purest intentions) to follow their own conceits, in material cases.

A ray of hope of future reconciliation darts in upon my mind, from the intention you tell me my mother had to exert herself in my favour, had I not gone away. And my hope is the stronger, as this communication points out to me, that my *uncle Harlowe's interest* is likely, in my mother's opinion, to be of weight, if it could be engaged. It will behove me, perhaps, to apply to that dear uncle, if a proper occasion offer.

LETTER LVI.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday, April 24.

FATE is weaving a whimsical web for thy friend; and I see not but I shall be inevitably manacled.

Here have I been at work, dig, dig, dig, like a cunning miner, at one time, and spreading my snares, like an artful fowler, at another, and exulting in my contrivances to get this inimitable creature absolutely into my power. Every thing made for me. Her brother and uncles were but my pioneers: her father stormed as I directed him to storm. Mrs. Howe was acted by the springs I set at work: her daughter was moving for me, and yet imagined herself plump against me, and the dear creature herself had already run her stubborn neck into my gin, and knew not that she was caught,

for I had not drawn my springes close about her; and just as all this was completed, wouldst thou believe, that I should be my own enemy, and her friend?—that I should be so totally diverted from all my favourite purposes, as to propose to marry her before I went to town, in order to put it out of my own power to resume them?

When thou knowest this, wilt thou not think that my black angel plays me booty, and has taken it into his head to urge me on to the indissoluble tie, that he might be more sure of me (from the complex transgressions to which he will certainly stimulate me, when wedded) than perhaps he thought he could be from the simple sins, in which I have so long allowed myself, that they seem to have the plea of habit?

Thou wilt be still the more surprised, when I tell thee, that there seems to be a coalition going forward between the black angels and the white ones; for here has her's induced her in one hour, and by one retrogade accident, to *acknowledge* what the charming creature never before acknowledged, a preferable favour for me. She even avows an intention to be mine:—mine, without reformation-conditions.—She permits me to talk of love to her: of the irrevocable ceremony: yet, another extraordinary! postpones that ceremony; chooses to set out for London; and even to go to the widow's in town.

Well, but how comes all this about? methinks thou askest.—Thou, Lovelace, dealest in wonders; yet aimest not at the *marvellous*—how did all this come about?

I will tell thee—I was *in danger of losing my charmer for ever*.—She was soaring upward to her native skies. She was got above earth, by means, too, of the *earth-born*: and something extraordinary

was to be done to keep her with us sublunaries. And what so effectually as the soothing voice of love, and the attracting offer of matrimony from a man not hated, can fix the attention of the maiden heart, aching with uncertainty; and before impatient of the questionable question?

This, in short, was the case—while she was refusing all manner of obligation to me, keeping me at haughty distance, in hopes that her cousin Morden's arrival would soon fix her in a full and absolute independence of me: disgusted likewise at her adorer, for holding himself the reins of his own passions, instead of giving them up to her controul—she writes a letter, urging an answer to a letter before sent, for her apparel, her jewels, and some gold, which she had left behind her; all which was to save her pride from obligation, and to promote the independence her heart was set upon. And what followed but a shocking answer, made still more shocking by the communication of a father's curse upon a daughter deserving only blessings!—A curse upon the curser's heart, and a double one upon the transmitter's, the spiteful, the envious Arabella!

Absent when it came; on my return I found her recovering from fits, again to fall into stronger fits; and nobody expecting her life; half a dozen messengers dispatched to find me out. Nor wonder at her being so affected; she, whose filial piety gave her dreadful faith in a father's curses; and the curse of this gloomy tyrant extending (to use her own words, when she could speak) *to both worlds*—O that it had turned, in the moment of its utterance, to a mortal quinsy, and, sticking in his gullet, had choked the old execrator, as a warning to all such unnatural fathers!

What a miscreant had I been, not to have endea-

voured to bring her back, by all the endearments, by all the vows, by all the offers that I could make her!

I *did* bring her back. More than a father to her: for I have given her a life her unnatural father had well-nigh taken away: shall I not cherish the fruits of my own benefaction? I was earnest in my vows to marry; and my ardour to urge the present time was a *real* ardour. But extreme dejection, with a mingled delicacy, that in her dying moments I doubt not she will preserve, have caused her to refuse me the *time*, though not the solemnity; for she has told me, that now she must be wholly in my protection [*being destitute of every other!*]—More indebted, still, thy friend, as thou seest, to her cruel relations, than to herself, for her favour!

She has written to Miss Howe an account of their barbarity; but *has not acquainted her how very ill she was.*

Low, very low, she remains; yet, dreading her stupid brother's enterprise, she wants to be in London; where, but for *this* accident and (wouldst thou have believed it?) for *my persuasions,* seeing her so very ill, she would have been this night; and we shall actually set out on Wednesday morning, if she be not worse.

And now for a few words with thee, on thy heavy preachment of Saturday last.

Thou art apprehensive, that the lady is now truly in danger; and it is a miracle, thou tellest me, if she withstand such an attempter; "Knowing what we know of the sex, thou sayest, thou shouldst dread, wert thou me, to make further trial, lest thou shouldst succeed. And, in another place, tellest me, that thou pleadest not for the state for any favour thou hast for it.'

What an advocate art thou for matrimony!

Thou wert ever an unhappy fellow at argument. Does the trite stuff with which the rest of thy letter abounds, in *favour* of wedlock, strike with the force that this which I have transcribed does *against* it?

Thou takest great pains to convince me, and that from the distresses the lady is reduced to (chiefly by her friends' persecutions and implacableness, I hope thou wilt own, and not from me, as yet) that the proposed trial will not be a fair trial. But let me ask thee, is not calamity the test of virtue? and wouldst thou not have me value this charming creature upon *proof* of her merits?—Do I not intend to reward her by marriage, if she stand that *proof?*

But why repeat I what I have said before?—Turn back, thou egregious arguer, turn back to my long letter of the 13th*; and thou wilt there find every syllable of what thou hast written either answered or invalidated.

But I am not angry with thee, Jack. I love opposition. As gold is tried by fire, and virtue by temptation, so is sterling wit by opposition. Have I not, before thou settest out as an advocate for my fair one, often brought thee in, as making objections to my proceedings, for no other reason than to exalt myself by proving thee a man of straw? As Homer raises up many of his champions, and gives them terrible names, only to have them knocked on the head by his heroes.

However, take to thee this one piece of advice—evermore be sure of being in the right, when thou presumest to sit down to correct thy master.

And another, if thou wilt—never offer to invalidate the force which a virtuous education ought to

* See Letter xiv. p. 86—96.

have on the sex, by endeavouring to find excuses for *their* frailty from the frailty of ours. For, are we not devils to each other? They tempt us: we tempt them. Because we *men* cannot resist temptation, is that a reason that *women* ought not, when the whole of their education is caution and warning against our attempts? Do not their grandmothers give them one easy rule—men are to ask—women are to deny.

Well, but to return to my principal subject; let me observe, that be my future resolutions what they will as to this lady, the contents of the violent letter she has received, have set me at least a month forward with her. I can now, as I hinted, talk of love and marriage, without control or restriction; her injunctions no more my terror.

In this sweetly familiar way shall we set out together for London. Mrs. Sorlings's eldest daughter, at my motion, is to attend her in the chaise; while I ride by way of escort: for she is extremely apprehensive of the Singleton plot; and has engaged me to be all patience, if any thing should happen on the road. But nothing I am sure *will* happen: for, by a letter received just now from Joseph, I understand, that James Harlowe has already laid aside his stupid project: and this by the earnest desire of all those of his friends to whom he had communicated it; who were afraid of the consequences that might attend it. But it is not over with *me*, however; although I am not determined at present as to the uses I may make of it.

My beloved tells me, she shall have her clothes sent her: she hopes also her jewels, and some gold, which she left behind her. But Joseph says, clothes *only* will be sent. I will not, however, tell her that: on the contrary, I say, there is no doubt but they will send *all* she wrote for. The greater

her disappointment *from them*, the greater must be her dependence *on me*.

But after all, I hope I shall be enabled to be honest to a merit so transcendent. The devil take thee though for thy opinion given so mal-à-propos, that she *may be* overcome.

If thou designest to be honest, methinks thou sayest, why should not Singleton's plot be over with *thee*, as it is with her *brother*?

Because (if I *must* answer thee) where people are so modestly doubtful of what they are able to do, it is good to leave a loop-hole. And let me add, that when a man's heart is set upon a point, and any thing occurs to beat him off, he will find it very difficult, when the suspending reason ceases, to forbear resuming it.

LETTER LVII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday, April 25.

All hands at work in preparation for London. What makes my heart beat so strong? why rises it to my throat, in such half-choking flutters, when I think of what this removal may do for me? I am hitherto resolved to be honest: and that increases my wonder at these involuntary commotions. 'Tis a plotting villain of a heart: it ever was; and ever will be, I doubt. Such a joy when any roguery is going forward!—I so little its master!—A head likewise so well turned to answer the triangular varlet's impulses!—No matter. I will have one struggle with thee, old friend; and if I cannot overcome thee now, I never will again attempt to conquer thee.

The dear creature continues extremely low and dejected. Tender blossom! how unfit to contend with the rude and ruffling winds of passion, and haughty and insolent controul!—Never till now from under the wing (it is not enough to say of indulging, but) of *admiring* parents; the mother's bosom only fit to receive this charming flower!

This was the reflection, that, with mingled compassion, and augmented love, arose to my mind, when I beheld the charmer reposing her lovely face upon the bosom of the widow Sorlings, from a recovered fit, as I entered soon after she had received her execrable sister's letter. How lovely in her tears!—and as I entered, her lifted-up face significantly bespeaking my protection, as I thought. And can I be a villain to such an angel! —I hope not—but why, Belford, why, once more, puttest thou me in mind, that she *may be* overcome? and why is her own reliance on my honour so late and so reluctantly shown?

But, after all, so low, so dejected continues she to be, that I am terribly afraid I shall have a vapourish wife, if I *do* marry. I should then be doubly undone. Not that I shall be *much at home with her, perhaps, after the first fortnight, or so.* But when a man has been ranging, like the painful bee, from flower to flower, perhaps for a month together, and the thoughts of home and a wife begin to have their charms with him, to be received by a Niobe, who, like a wounded vine, weeps her vitals away, while she but involuntary curls about him; how shall I be able to bear that?

May heaven restore my charmer to health and spirits, I hourly pray—that a man may see whether she can love any body but her father and mother! In *their* power, I am confident, it will be, at any time, to make her husband joyless; and that, as I

hate them so heartily, is a shocking thing to reflect upon.—Something *more* than woman, an *angel*, in some things; but a *baby* in others: so father-sick! so family-fond! what a poor chance stands a husband with such a wife, unless, forsooth, they vouchsafe to be reconciled to her, and *continue* reconciled!

It is infinitely better for her and for me, that we should not marry. What a delightful manner of life [O that I could persuade her to it!] would the life of honour be with such a woman! The fears, the inquietudes, the uneasy days, the restless nights; all arising from doubts of having disobliged me! Every absence dreaded to be an absence for ever! And then, how amply rewarded, and rewarding, by the rapture-causing return! Such a passion as this keeps love in a continual fervour; makes it all alive. The happy pair, instead of sitting dozing and nodding at each other in opposite chimney-corners in a winter evening, and over a wintry love, always new to each other, and having always something to say.

Thou knowest, in my verses to my Stella, my mind on this occasion. I will lay those verses in her way, as if undesignedly, when we are together at the widow's; that is to say, if we do not soon go to church by consent. She will thence see what my notions are of wedlock. If she receives them with any sort of temper, that will be a foundation; and let *me* alone to build upon it.

Many a girl has been *carried*, who never would have been *attempted*, had she showed a proper resentment, when her ears or her eyes were first invaded. I have tried a young creature by a bad book, a light quotation, or an indecent picture; and if she has borne that, or only blushed, and not been angry; and more especially if she has leered

and smiled; that girl have I, and old Satan, put down for our own. O how I could warn these little rogues if I would! Perhaps envy, more than virtue, will put me upon setting up beacons for them, when I grow old and joyless.

Tuesday afternoon.

If you are in London when I get thither, you will see me soon. My charmer is a little better than she was. Her eyes show it, and her harmonious voice, hardly audible last time I saw her, now begins to cheer my heart once more. But yet she has no love, no sensibility!—There is no addressing her with those *meaning*, yet *innocent* freedoms (innocent, *at first setting out*, they may be called) which soften others of her sex. The more strange this, as she now acknowledges preferable favour for me; and is highly susceptible of grief. Grief mollifies and enervates. The grieved mind looks round it, silently implores consolation, and loves the soother. Grief is ever an inmate with joy. Though they won't show themselves at the same window at *one* time; yet they have the whole house in common between them.

LETTER LVIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wedn. April 26.

At last my lucky star has directed us into the desired port, and we are safely landed. Well says Rowe:

> The wise and active conquer difficulties
> By daring to attempt them. Sloth and folly
> Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,
> And *make* th' impossibility they *fear*.

But in the midst of my exultation, something, I know not what to call it, checks my joys, and glooms over my brighter prospects. If it be not conscience, it is wondrously like what I thought so, many, many years ago.

Surely, Lovelace, methinks thou sayest, thy good motions are not gone off already! surely thou wilt not now at last be a villain to this lady!

I can't tell what to say to it. Why would not the dear creature accept of me, when I so sincerely offered myself to her acceptance. Things already appear with a very different face *now I have got her here.* Already have our mother and her daughters been about me: 'Charming lady! what a complexion! what eyes! what majesty in her person!—O Mr. Lovelace, you are a happy man!—*You owe us such a lady!*'—Then they remind me of my revenge, and of my hatred to her whole family.

Sally was so struck with her, at first sight, that she broke out to me in these lines of Dryden:

> ——Fairer to be seen
> Than the fair lily on the flow'ry green!
> More fresh than May herself in blossoms new!

I sent to thy lodgings within half an hour after our arrival, to receive thy congratulation upon it: but thou wert at Edgeware, it seems.

My beloved, who is charmingly amended, is retired to her constant employment, writing. I must content myself with the same amusement, till she shall be pleased to admit me to her presence; for already have I given to every one her cue.

And, among the rest, who dost thou think is to be her maid servant?—Deb. Butler.

Ah, Lovelace!

And ah, Belford! it can't be otherwise. But

what dost think Deb's name is to be?—Why Dorcas, Dorcas Wykes. And won't it be admirable, if either through fear, fright, or good liking, we can get my beloved to accept of Dorcas Wykes for a bedfellow?

In so many ways will it be now in my power to have the dear creature, that I shall not know which of them to choose!

But here comes the widow, with Dorcas Wykes in her hand; and I am to introduce them both to my fair one.

* * *

So—the honest girl is accepted—of good parentage: but, through a neglected education, plaguy illiterate—she can neither write, nor read writing. A kinswoman of Mrs. Sinclair—could not therefore well be refused, the widow in person recommending her; and the wench only taken till her Hannah can come. What an advantage has an imposing or forward nature over a courteous one! So here may something arise to lead into correspondences, and so forth. To be sure, a person need not be *so wary, so cautious of what she writes, or what she leaves upon her table or toilette, when her attendant cannot read.*

It would be a miracle, as thou sayest, if this lady can save herself—and having gone so far, how can I recede?—Then my revenge upon the Harlowes! to have run away with a daughter of theirs, to make her a Lovelace—to make her one of a family so superior to her own, what a triumph, as I have heretofore observed * to *them!*—But to run away with her, and to bring her to my lure in the *other* light, what a mortification of their pride! what a gratification of my own!

* See p. 85.

Then these women are continually at me. These women, who, before my whole soul and faculties were absorbed in the love of this single charmer, used always to oblige me with the flower and first fruits of their garden! Indeed, indeed, my goddess should not have chosen this London widow's—but I dare say, if I *had*, she would *not*. People who will be dealing in contradiction, ought to pay for it. And to be punished by the consequences of our own choice, what a moral lies there!—What a deal of good may I not be the occasion of from a little evil!

Dorcas is a neat creature, both in person and dress; her countenance not vulgar. And I am in hopes, as I hinted above, that her lady will accept of her for her bedfellow, in a strange house, for a week or so. But I saw she had a dislike to her at her very first appearance: yet I thought the girl behaved very modestly—*over-did* it a little perhaps—her lady shrunk back, and looked shy upon her. The doctrine of sympathies and antipathies is a surprising doctrine.—But Dorcas will be excessively obliging, and win her lady's favour soon, I doubt not. I am secure in one of the wench's qualities however—she is not to be corrupted. A great point that!—Since a lady and her maid, when heartily of one party, will be too hard for half a score devils.

The dear creature was no less shy when the widow first accosted her at her alighting. Yet I thought that honest Doleman's letter had prepared her for her masculine appearance.

And now I mention that letter, why dost thou not wish me joy, Jack?

Joy of what?

Why, joy of my nuptials.—Know then, that *said* is *done* with me, when I have a mind to have it so;

and that we are actually man and wife: only that consummation has not passed—bound down to the contrary of that, by a solemn vow, till a reconciliation with her family take place. The women here are told so. They know it before my beloved knows it; and that, thou wilt say, is odd.

But how shall I do to make my fair-one keep her temper on the intimation? *Why, is she not here?*—at Mrs. Sinclair's? But if she will hear reason, I doubt not to convince her, that she ought to acquiesce.

She will insist, I suppose, upon my leaving her, and that I shall not take up my lodgings under the same roof. But circumstances are changed since I first made her that promise. I have taken all the vacant apartments; and must carry this point also.

I hope in a while to get her with me to the public entertainments. She knows nothing of the town, and has seen less of its diversions than ever woman of her taste, her fortune, her endowments, did see. She has indeed a natural politeness, which transcends all acquirement. The most capable of any one I ever knew, of judging what an *hundred* things are by seeing *one* of a like nature. Indeed she took so much pleasure in her own chosen amusements, till persecuted out of them, that she had neither leisure nor inclination for the town diversions.

These diversions will amuse. And the deuce is in it, if a little susceptibility will not put forth, now she receives my address; especially if I can manage it so, as to be allowed to live under *one* roof with her. What though the sensibility be at first faint and reluctant, like the appearance of an early spring-flower in frosty-weather, which seems afraid of being nipt by an easterly blast: that will be enough for me.

I hinted to thee in a former*, that I had provided books for the lady's in-door amusement. Sally and Polly are readers. My beloved's light closet was their library. And several pieces of devotion have been put in, bought on purpose, at *second-hand.*

I was always for forming a judgment of the reading part of the sex by their books. The observations I have made on this occasion have been of great use to me, as well in England as out of it. This sagacious lady may possibly be as curious in this point as her Lovelace.

So much for the present. Thou seest that I have a great deal of business before me. Yet I will write again soon.

Mr. Lovelace sends another letter with this; in which he takes notice of young Mrs. Sorlings's setting out with them, and leaving them at Barnet: but, as its contents are nearly the same with those in the lady's next letter, it is omitted.

LETTER LIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Wednesday afternoon, April 26.

At length, my dearest Miss Howe, I am in London, and in my new lodgings. They are neatly furnished, and the situation, for the town, is pleasant.

But, I think you must not ask me, how I like the old gentlewoman. Yet she seems courteous and obliging. Her kinswomen just appeared to welcome me at my alighting. They seem to be genteel young women. But more of their aunt and of them, as I shall see more.

* See p. 204.

Miss Sorlings has an uncle at Barnet, whom she found so very ill, that her uneasiness on that account (having large expectations from him) made me comply with her desire to stay with him. Yet I wished, as her uncle did not expect her, that she would see me settled in London; and Mr. Lovelace was still more earnest that she would, offering to send her back again in a day or two, and urging, that her uncle's malady threatened not a sudden change. But leaving the matter to *her choice*, after she knew what *would have been mine*, she made me not the expected compliment. Mr. Lovelace, however, made her a handsome present at parting.

His genteel spirit on all occasions makes me often wish him more consistent.

As soon as I arrived, I took possession of my apartment. I shall make good use of the light closet in it, if I stay here any time.

One of his attendants returns in the morning to the Lawn; and I made writing to you by him, an excuse for my retiring.

And now give me leave to chide you, my dearest friend, for your rash, and I hope revocable resolution, not to make Mr. Hickman the happiest man in the world, while my happiness is in suspense. Suppose I were to be unhappy, what, my dear, would this resolution of yours avail me? Marriage is the highest state of friendship: if happy, it lessens our cares by dividing them, at the same time that it doubles our pleasures by a mutual participation. Why, my dear, if you love me, will you not rather give *another* friend to one who has *not two* that she is sure of?—Had you married on your mother's last birth-day, as she would have had you, I should not, I dare say, have wanted a refuge, that would have saved me many mortifications and much disgrace.

* * *

Here I was broke in upon by Mr. Lovelace; introducing the widow leading in a kinswoman of hers to attend me, if I approved of her, till my Hannah should come, or till I had provided myself with some other servant. The widow gave her many good qualities; but said, that she had one great defect; which was, that she could not write, nor read writing; that part of her education having been neglected when she was young: but for discretion, fidelity, obligingness, she was not to be outdone by any body. She commended her likewise for her skill at the needle.

As for her *defect*, I can easily forgive that. She is very likely and genteel; too genteel indeed, I think, for a servant. But, what I like least of all in her, she has a strange sly eye. I never saw such an eye—half-confident, I think. But indeed Mrs. Sinclair herself (for that is the widow's name,) has an odd winking eye; and her respectfulness seems too much studied, methinks, for the London ease and freedom. But people can't help their looks, you know; and after all, she is extremely civil and obliging. And as for the young woman, (Dorcas is her name) she will not be long with me.

I accepted her: how could I do otherwise, (if I had had a mind to make objections, which in my present situation I had not) her aunt present, and the young woman also present; and Mr. Lovelace officious in his introducing them to oblige me? But, upon their leaving me, I told *him* (who seemed inclinable to begin a conversation with me) that I desired that this apartment might be considered as my retirement: that when I saw him it might be in the dining-room (which is up a few stairs; for this back house, being once two, the rooms do not all of them very conveniently communicate with each other;) and that I might be as little broken

in upon as possible, when I am here. He withdrew very respectfully to the door; but there stopt, and asked for my company *then* in the dining-room. If he were about setting out for other lodgings, I would go with him now, I told him: but, if he did not just then go, I would first finish my letter to Miss Howe.

I see he has no mind to leave me, if he can help it. My brother's scheme may give him a pretence to try to engage me to dispense with his promise. But if I *now do,* I must acquit him of it entirely.

My approbation of his tender behaviour in the midst of my grief has given him a right, as he seems to think, of addressing me with all the freedom of an approved lover. I see by this man, that when once a woman embarks with this sex, there is no receding. One concession is but the prelude to another with them. He has been ever since Sunday last continually complaining of the distance I keep him at; and thinks himself entitled now, to call in question my value for him; strengthening his doubts by my former declared readiness to give him up to a reconciliation with my friends—and yet has himself fallen off from that *obsequious tenderness,* if I may couple the words, which drew from me the concessions he builds upon.

While we were talking at the door, my new servant came up, with an invitation to us both to tea. I said *he* might accept of it, if he pleased; but I must pursue my writing: and not choosing either tea or supper, I desired him to make my excuses below, as to both; and inform them of my choice to be retired as much as possible: yet to promise for me my attendance on the widow and her nieces at breakfast in the morning.

He objected particularity in the eye of strangers, as to avoiding supper.

You know, said I, and you can tell them, that I seldom eat suppers. My spirits are low. You must never urge me against a declared choice. Pray, Mr. Lovelace, inform them of all my particularities. If they are obliging, they will allow for them. I come not hither to make new acquaintance.

I have turned over the books I found in my closet; and am not a little pleased with them; and think the better of the people of the house for their sakes.

Stanhope's Gospels; Sharp's, Tillotson's, and South's Sermons; Nelson's Feasts and Fasts; a sacramental piece of the Bishop of Man, and another of Dr. Gauden, Bishop of Exeter; and Innett's Devotions; are among the devout books: and among those of a lighter turn, the following not ill-chosen ones: a Telemachus in French, another in English; Steel's, Rowe's, and Shakspeare's Plays; that genteel comedy of Mr. Cibber, the Careless Husband, and others of the same author; Dryden's Miscellanies; the Tatlers, Spectators, and Guardians, Pope's and Swift's, and Addison's Works.

In the blank leaves of the Nelson and Bishop Gauden, is Mrs. Sinclair's name; and in those of most of the others, either Sarah Martin or Mary Horton, the names of the two nieces.

* * *

I am exceedingly out of humour with Mr. Lovelace: and have great reason to be so. As you will allow, when you have read the conversation I am going to give you an account of; for he would not let me rest till I gave him my company in the dining-room.

He began with letting me know, that he had been out to inquire after the character of the widow, which was the more necessary, he said, as he supposed that I would *expect his frequent absence.*

I *did,* I said; and that he would not think of taking up his lodging in the same house with me. But what, said I, is the result of your inquiry?

Why, indeed, the widow's character was, in the main, what he liked well enough. But as it was Miss Howe's opinion, as I had told him, that my brother had not given over his scheme; as the widow lived by letting lodgings; and had others to let in the same part of the house, which might be taken by an enemy; he knew no better way than for him to take them all, as it could not be for a long time—*unless I would think of removing to others.*

So far was well enough: but as it was easy for me to see, that he spoke the slighter of the widow, in order to have a pretence to lodge here himself, I asked him his intention in that respect. And he frankly owned, that if I chose to stay here, he could not, as matters stood, think of leaving me for six hours together; and he had prepared the widow to expect, that we should be here but for a few days;—only till we could fix ourselves in a house suitable to our condition; and this, that I might be under the less embarrassment, if I pleased to remove.

Fix *our*-selves in a house, and *we* and *our,* Mr. Lovelace—pray, in what light?

He interrupted me—Why, my dearest life, if you will hear me with patience—yet I am half afraid, that I have been too forward, as I have not consulted you upon it—but as my friends in town, according to what Mr. Doleman has written, in the letter you have seen, conclude us to be married—

Surely, sir, you have not presumed—

Hear me out, dearest creature—you have received with favour my addresses—you have mede me hope for the honour of your consenting hand: yet, by declining my most fervent tender of myself to you at Mrs. Sorlings's, have given me apprehensions of delay: I would not for the world be thought so ungenerous a wretch, now you have honoured me with your confidence, *as to wish to precipitate you*: yet your brother's schemes are not given up. Singleton, I am afraid, is actually in town! his vessel lies at Rotherhithe—your brother is absent from Harlowe Place; indeed not with Singleton yet, as I can hear. If you are *known* to be mine, or if you are but *thought* to be so, there will probably be an end of your brother's contrivances. The widow's character may be as worthy *as it is said to be.* But the worthier she is, the more danger, if your brother's agent should find us out; since she may be persuaded, that she ought in conscience to take a parent's part, against a child who stands in opposition to them. But if she believes us married, her good character will stand us in stead, and she will be of our party.—Then I have taken care to give her a reason why two apartments are requisite for us at the hour of retirement.

I perfectly raved at him. I would have flung from him in resentment; but he would not let me: and what could I do? Whither go, the evening advanced?

I am astonished at you! said I.—If you are a man of honour, what need of all this strange obliquity? You delight in crooked ways—let me know, since I *must* stay in your company, (for he held my hand) let me know all you have said to

the people below.—Indeed, indeed, Mr. Lovelace, you are a very unaccountable man.

My dearest creature, need I to have mentioned any thing of this? And could I not have taken up my lodgings in this house unknown to you, if I had not intended to make you the judge of all my proceedings? But *this* is what I have told the widow before her kinswomen, and before your new servant—'That indeed we were privately married at Hertford; but that you had preliminarily bound me under a solemn vow, which I am most religiously resolved to keep, to be contented with separate apartments, and even not to lodge under the same roof, till a certain reconciliation shall take place, which is of high consequence to both.' And further, that I might convince you of the purity of my intentions, and that my whole view in this was to prevent mischief, I have acquainted them, 'that I have solemnly promised to behave to you before every body, as if we were only betrothed, and not married; not even offering to take any of those innocent freedoms which are not refused in the most punctilious loves.'

And then he solemnly vowed to me the strictest observance of the same respectful behaviour to me.

I said, that I was not by any means satisfied with the tale he had told, nor with the necessity he wanted to lay me under, of appearing what I was not: that every step he took was a wry one, a needless wry one: and since he thought it necessary to tell the people below any thing about me, I insisted that he should unsay all he had said, and tell them the truth.

What he had told them, he said, was with so many circumstances, that he could sooner die than contradict it. And still he insisted upon the pro-

priety of appearing to be married, for the reasons he had given before—and, dearest creature, said he, why this high displeasure with me upon so well-intended an expedient? You know, that I cannot wish to shun your brother, or his Singleton, but upon your account. The first step I would take, if left to myself, would be to find them out. *I have always acted in this manner, when any body has presumed to give out threatenings against me.*

'Tis true I should have consulted you first, and had your leave. But since you dislike what I have said, let me implore you, dearest madam, to give the only proper sanction to it, by naming an early day. Would to heaven that were to be to-morrow!—For God's sake, let it be to-morrow! But if not, [was it his business, my dear, before I spoke (yet he seemed to be afraid of me) to say, *if not?*] let me beseech you, madam, if my behaviour shall not be to your dislike, that you will not to-morrow, at breakfast-time, discredit what I have told them. The moment I give you cause to think, that I take any advantage of your concession, that moment revoke it, and expose me, as I shall deserve.—And once more, let me remind you, that I have no view either to serve or save myself by this expedient. It is only to prevent a probable mischief, for your own mind's sake; and for the sake of those who deserve not the least consideration from me.

What could I say? What could I do?—I verily think, that had he urged me again, in a *proper manner*, I should have consented (little satisfied as I am with him) to give him a meeting to-morrow morning at a more solemn place than in the parlour below.

But this I resolve, that he shall not have my consent to stay a night under this roof. He has

now given me a stronger reason for this determination than I had before.

* * *

Alas! my dear, how vain a thing to say, what we will or what we will not do, when we have put ourselves into the power of this sex!—He went down to the people below, on my desiring to be left to myself; and staid till their supper was just ready; and then, desiring a moment's *audience*, as he called it, he besought my leave to stay that one night, promising to set out either for Lord M.'s, or for Edgeware to his friend Belford's, in the morning, after breakfast. But if I were against it, he said, he would not stay supper; and would attend me about eight next day—yet he added, that my denial would have a very particular appearance to the people below, from what he had told them; and the more, as he had actually agreed for all the vacant apartments (indeed only for a month) for the reason he before hinted at: but I need not stay here two days, if, upon conversing with the widow and her nieces in the morning, I should have any dislike to them.

I thought, notwithstanding my resolution abovementioned, that it would seem too punctilious to deny him, under the circumstances he had mentioned:—having, besides, no reason to think he would obey me; for he looked as if he were determined to debate the matter with me. And now as I see no likelihood of a reconciliation with my friends, and as I have actually received his addresses, I thought I would not quarrel with him, if I could help it, especially as he asked to stay but for one night, and could have done so without my knowing it; and you being of opinion, that the proud wretch, distrusting his own merits with me,

or at least my regard for him, will probably bring me to some concessions in his favour—for all these reasons, I thought proper to yield *this* point: yet I was so vexed with him on the *other*, that it was impossible for me to comply with that grace which a concession should be made with, or not made at all.

This was what I said—What you *will* do, you *must* do, I think. You are very ready to promise; very ready to depart from your promise. You say, however, that you will set out to-morrow for the country. You know how ill I have been. I am not well enough now to debate with you upon your encroaching ways. I am utterly dissatisfied with the tale you have told below. Nor will I promise to appear to the people of the house to-morrow what I am not.

He withdrew in the most respectful manner, beseeching me only to favour him with such a meeting in the morning, as might not make the widow and her nieces think he had given me reason to be offended with him.

I retired to my own apartment, and Dorcas came to me soon after to take my commands. I told her, that I required very little attendance, and always dressed and undressed myself.

She seemed concerned, as if she thought I had repulsed her; and said, it should be her whole study to oblige me.

I told her, that I was not difficult to be pleased: and should let her know from time to time what assistance I should expect from her. But for that night I had no occasion for her further attendance.

She is not only genteel, but is well-bred, and well-spoken.—She must have had what is generally thought to be the polite part of education: but it is strange, that fathers and mothers should make

so light, as they generally do, of that preferable part, in girls, which would improve their minds, and give a grace to all the rest.

As soon as she was gone, I inspected the doors, the windows, the wainscoat, the dark closet as well as the light one; and finding very good fastening to the door, and to all the windows, I had again recourse to my pen.

* * *

Mrs. Sinclair is just now gone from me. Dorcas, she told me, had acquainted her, that I had dismissed her for the night. She came to ask me how I liked my apartment, and to wish me good rest. She expressed her concern, that they could not have my company at supper. Mr. Lovelace, she said, had informed them of my love of retirement. She assured me, that I should not be broken in upon. She highly extolled *him,* and gave *me* a share in the praise, as to person. But was sorry, she said, that she was likely to lose us so soon as Mr. Lovelace talked of.

I answered her with suitable civility; and she withdrew with great tokens of respect. With greater, I think, than should be from distance of years, as she was the wife of a gentleman; and as the appearance of every thing about her, as well house as dress, carries the marks of such good circumstances, as require not abasement.

If, my dear, you *will* write against prohibition, be pleased to direct, *To Miss Lætitia Beaumont; to be left till called for, at Mr. Wilson's, in Pall Mall.*

Mr. Lovelace proposed this direction to me, not *knowing* of your desire that our letters should pass by a third hand. As his motive for it was, that my brother might not trace out where we are, I am glad, as well from this instance as from others, that

he seems to think he has done mischief enough already.

Do you know how my poor Hannah does?

Mr. Lovelace is so full of his contrivances and expedients, that I think it may not be amiss to desire you to look carefully to the seals of my letters, as I shall to those of yours. If I find him base in this particular, I shall think him capable of any evil; and will fly him as my worst enemy.

LETTER LX.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

With her two last Letters, No. liv. lv. inclosed.

Thursday night, April 27.

I HAVE yours; just brought me. Mr. Hickman has helped me to a lucky expedient, which, with the assistance of the post, will enable me to correspond with you every day. An honest higgler, [Simon Collins his name] by whom I shall send this, and the two inclosed, (now I have your directions whither) goes to town constantly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; and can bring back to me from Mr. Wilson's what you shall have caused to be left for me.

I congratulate you on your arrival in town, so much amended in spirits. I must be brief. I hope you'll have no cause to repent returning my Norris; it is forthcoming on demand.

I am sorry your Hannah can't be with you. She is very ill still; but not dangerously.

I long for your account of the women you are with. If they are not right people, you will find them out in one breakfasting.

I know not what to write upon his reporting to them that you are actually married. His reasons for it are plausible. But he delights in odd expedients and inventions.

Whether you like the people or not, do not, by your noble sincerity and plain dealing, make yourself enemies. You are in the *world* now, you know.

I am glad you had thoughts of taking him at his offer, if he had re-urged it. I wonder he did not. But if he do not soon, and in such a way as you *can* accept of it, don't think of staying with him.

Depend upon it, my dear, he will not leave you either night or day, if he can help it, now he has got footing.

I should have abhorred him for his report of your marriage, had he not made it with such circumstances as leave it still in your power to keep him at distance. If once he offer at the *least* familiarity—but this is needless to say to you. He can have, I think, no other design but what he professes; because he must needs think, that his report of being married to you must increase your vigilance.

You may depend upon my looking narrowly into the sealings of your letters. If, as you say, he be base in that point, he will be so in every thing: but to a person of your merit, of your fortune, of your virtue, he cannot be base. The man is no fool. It is his interest, as well with regard to his expectations from his own friends, as from you, to be honest. Would to heaven, however, that you were *really* married! This is now the predominant wish of

Your
ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday morning, eight o'clock.

I AM more and more displeased with Mr. Lovelace, on reflection, for his boldness in hoping to make me, though but *passively*, as I may say, testify to his great untruth. And I shall like him still less for it, if his view in it does not come out to be *the hope of accelerating my resolution in his favour*, by the difficulty it will lay me under as to my behaviour to him. He has sent me his compliments by Dorcas, with a request that I will permit him to attend me in the dining-room,—perhaps, that he may guess from thence, whether I will meet him in good humour, or not: but I have answered, that as I shall see him at breakfast-time I desired to be excused.

Ten o'clock.

I TRIED to adjust my countenance, before I went down, to an easier air than I had a heart, and was received with the highest tokens of respect by the widow and her two nieces: agreeable young women enough in their persons; but they seemed to put on an air of reserve; while Mr. Lovelace was easy and free to all, as if he were of long acquaintance with them: gracefully enough, I cannot but say; an advantage which travelled gentlemen have over other people.

The widow, in the conversation we had after breakfast, gave us an account of the military merits of the Colonel her husband, and, upon this occasion, put her handkerchief to her eyes twice or thrice. I hope for the sake of her sincerity, she wetted it, because she would be *thought* to have

done so; but I saw not that she did. She wished that I might never know the loss of a husband so dear to me, as her beloved Colonel was to her: and she again put her handkerchief to her eyes.

It must, no doubt, be a most affecting thing to be separated from a good husband, and to be left in difficult circumstances besides, and that not by *his* fault, and exposed to the insults of the base and ungrateful, as she represented her case to be at his death. This moved me a good deal in her favour.

You know, my dear, that I have an open and free heart; and naturally have as open and free a countenance; at least my complimenters have told me so. At once, where I like, I mingle minds without reserve, encouraging reciprocal freedoms, and am forward to dissipate diffidences. But with these two nieces of the widow I never can be intimate—I don't know why.

Only that circumstances, and what passed in conversation, encouraged not the notion, or I should have been apt to think, that the young ladies and Mr. Lovelace were of longer acquaintance than of yesterday. For he, by stealth as it were, cast glances sometimes at them, which they returned; and, on my ocular notice, their eyes fell, as I may say, under my eye, as if they could not stand its examination.

The widow directed all her talk to me, as to Mrs. Lovelace; and I with a very ill grace bore it. And once she expressed more forwardly than I thanked her for, her wonder that any vow, any consideration, however weighty, could have force enough with so charming a couple, as she called him and me, to make us keep separate beds.

Their eyes, upon this hint, had the advantage of mine. Yet was I not conscious of guilt. How know I then, upon recollection, that my censures

upon theirs are not too rash? There are, no doubt, many truly modest persons (putting myself out of the question) who, by blushes at an injurious charge, have been suspected, by those who cannot distinguish between the confusion which guilt will be attended with, and the noble consciousness that overspreads the face of a fine spirit, to be thought but capable of an imputed evil.

The great Roman, as we read, who took his surname from one part in three (the fourth not then discovered) of the world he had triumphed over, being charged with a mean crime to his soldiery, chose rather to suffer exile (the punishment due to it, had he been found guilty) than to have it said, that Scipio was questioned in public, on so scandalous a charge. And think you, my dear, that Scipio did not blush with indignation, when the charge was first communicated to him?

Mr. Lovelace, when the widow expressed her forward wonder, looked sly and leering, as if to observe how I took it: and said, they might take notice that his regard for my will and pleasure (calling me his dear creature) had greater force upon him than the oath by which he had bound himself.

Rebuking both him and the widow, I said, it was strange to me to hear an oath or vow so lightly treated, as to have it thought but of second consideration, whatever were the first.

The observation was just, Miss Martin said; for that nothing could excuse the breaking of a solemn vow, be the occasion of making it what it would.

I asked after the nearest church; for I have been too long a stranger to the sacred worship. They named St. James's, St. Anne's, and another in Bloomsbury; and the two nieces said they oftenest went to St. James's church, because of the good company, as well as for the excellent preaching.

Mr. Lovelace said, the Royal Chapel was the place he oftenest went to, when in town. Poor man! little did I expect to hear he went to any place of devotion. I asked, if the presence of the visible king of, comparatively, but a small territory, did not take off, too generally, the requisite attention to the service of the invisible King and Maker of a thousand worlds?

He believed this might be so with such as came from curiosity, when the royal family were present. But otherwise, he had seen as many contrite faces at the Royal Chapel, as any where else: and why not? Since the people about court have as deep scores to wipe off, as any people whatsoever.

He spoke this with so much levity, that I could not help saying, that nobody questioned but he knew how to choose his company.

Your servant, my dear, bowing, were his words; and, turning to them, You will observe upon numberless occasions, ladies, as we are further acquainted, that my beloved never spares me upon these topics. But I admire her as much in her reproofs, as I am fond of her approbation.

Miss Horton said, there was a time for every thing. She could not but say, that she thought innocent mirth was mighty becoming in young people.

Very true, joined in Miss Martin. And Shakspeare says well, *That youth is the spring of life, the bloom of gaudy years*; [with a theatrical air she spoke it:] and for her part, she could not but admire in Mr. Lovelace that charming vivacity which so well suited his time of life.

Mr. Lovelace bowed. The man is fond of praise. More fond of it, I doubt, than of deserving it. Yet this sort of praise he *does* deserve. He has, you know, an easy free manner, and no bad voice: and this praise so expanded his gay heart, that he sung

the following lines from Congreve, as he told us they were:

> Youth does a thousand pleasures bring,
> Which from decripit age will fly;
> Sweets, that wanton in the bosom of the spring,
> In winter's cold embraces die.

And this for a compliment, as he said, to the two nieces. Nor was it thrown away upon them. They encored it; and his compliance fixed them in my memory.

We had some talk about meals, and the widow very civilly offered to conform to any rules I would set her. I told her how easily I was pleased, and how much I chose to dine by myself, and that from a plate sent me from any single dish. But I will not trouble you, my dear, with such particulars.

They thought me very singular; and with reason: but as I liked them not so *very* well as to forego my own choice in compliment to them, I was the less concerned for what they thought.—And still the less, as Mr. Lovelace had put me very much out of humour with him.

They, however, cautioned me against melancholy. I said, I should be a very unhappy creature if I could not bear my own company.

Mr. Lovelace said, that he must let the ladies into my story, and then they would know how to allow for my ways. But, *my dear, as you love me,* said the confident wretch, give as little way to melancholy as possible. Nothing but the sweetness of your temper, and your high notions of a duty that never can be deserved where you place it, can make you so uneasy as you are.—Be not angry, *my dear love,* for saying so (seeing me frown, I suppose): and

snatched my hand and kissed it.—I left him with them, and retired to my closet and my pen.

Just as I have written thus far, I am interrupted by a message from him, that he is setting out on a journey, and desires to take my commands.—So here I will leave off, to give him a meeting in the dining room.

* * *

I WAS not displeased to see him in his riding-dress.

He seemed desirous to know how I liked the gentlewomen below. I told him, that although I did not think them *very* exceptionable, yet as I wanted not, in my present situation, new acquaintance, I should not be fond of cultivating theirs.

He urged me still further on this head.

I could not say, I told him, that I greatly liked either of the young gentlewomen, any more than their aunt: and that were my situation ever so happy they had much too gay a turn for me.

He did not wonder, he said, to hear me say so. He knew not any of the sex who had been accustomed to show themselves at the town diversions and amusements, that would appear tolerable to me. *Silence* and *blushes*, madam, are now no graces with our fine ladies in town. Hardened by frequent public appearances, they would be as much ashamed to be found guilty of these weaknesses as men.

Do you defend these two gentlewomen, sir, by reflections upon half the sex? But you must second me, Mr. Lovelace, (and yet I am not fond of being thought particular) in my desire of breakfasting and supping (when I *do* sup) by myself.

If I would have it so, to be sure it should be so. The people of the house were not of consequence

enough to be apologized to, in any point where my pleasure was concerned. And if I should dislike them still more on further knowledge of them, he hoped I would think of *some other lodgings*.

He expressed a good deal of regret at leaving me, declaring, that it was absolutely in obedience to my commands: but that he could not have consented to go, while my brother's schemes were on foot, if I had not done him the credit of my countenance in the report he had made that we were married; which, he said, had bound all the family to his interest, so that he could leave me with the greater security and satisfaction.

He hoped, that on his *return* I would name his happy day; and the rather, as I might be convinced, by my brother's projects, that no reconciliation was to be expected.

I told him, that perhaps I might write one letter to my uncle Harlowe. He once loved me. I should be easier when I had made one direct application. I might possibly propose such terms, in relation to my grandfather's estate, as might procure me their attention; and I hoped he would be long enough absent to give me time to write to him, and receive an answer from him.

That, he must beg my pardon, he could not promise. He would inform himself of Singleton's and my brother's motions; and if on his return he found no reason for apprehension, he would go directly to Berks, and endeavour to bring up with him his cousin Charlotte, who, he hoped, would induce me to give him an earlier day than at present I *seemed to think of*.—I *seemed to think of*, my dear, very acquiescent, as I should imagine!

I told him, that I should take that young lady's company for a great favour.

I was the more pleased with this motion, as it came from himself, and with no ill grace.

He earnestly pressed me to accept of a bank note: but I declined it. And then he offered me his servant William for my attendant in his absence; who, he said, might be dispatched to him if any thing extraordinary fell out. I consented to that.

He took his leave of me in the most respectful manner, only kissing my hand. He left the bank note, unobserved by me, upon the table. You may be sure I shall give it him back at his return.

I am in a much better humour with him than I was.

Where doubts of any person are removed, a mind not ungenerous is willing, by way of amends for having conceived those doubts, to construe every thing that happens, *capable* of a good construction, in that person's favour. Particularly, I cannot but be pleased to observe, that although he speaks of the ladies of his family with the freedom of relationship, yet it is always with tenderness. And from a man's kindness to his relations of the sex, a woman has some reason to expect his good behaviour to herself, when married, if she be willing to deserve it from him.

And thus, my dear, am I brought to sit down satisfied with this man, where I find room to infer that he is not by nature a savage. But how could a creature, who gave a man an opportunity to run away with her, expect to be treated by that man with a very high degree of politeness?

But why, now, when fairer prospects seem to open, why these melancholy reflections? will my beloved friend ask of her Clarissa.

Why? Can you ask why, my dearest Miss Howe,

of a creature, who, in the world's eye, has enrolled her name among the giddy and the inconsiderate; who labours under a parent's curse, and the cruel uncertainties which must arise from reflecting, that, equally against duty and principle, she has thrown herself into the power of a man, and that man an immoral one?—Must not the sense she has of her inconsideration darken her most hopeful prospects? Must it not even rise *strongest* upon a thoughtful mind when her hopes are the fairest? Even her pleasures, were the man to prove better than she expects, coming to her with an abatement, like that which persons who are in possession of ill-gotten wealth must then most poignantly experience, (if they have reflecting and unseared minds) when, all their wishes answered, (if the wishes of such persons can ever be wholly answered) they sit down in hopes to *enjoy* what they have unjustly obtained, and find their own reflections their greatest torment.

May you, my dear friend, be always happy in your reflections, prays

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

Mr. Lovelace, in his next letter, triumphs on his having carried his two great points of making the lady yield to pass for his wife to the people of the house, and to his taking up his lodging in it, though but for one night. He is now, *he says,* in a fair way, and doubts not but that he shall soon prevail, if not by persuasion, by surprise, *Yet he pretends to have some little remorse, and* censures himself as acting the part of the grand tempter. But having succeeded thus far, he cannot, *he says,* forbear

trying, according to the resolution he had before made, whether he cannot go further.

He gives the particulars of their debates on the above-mentioned subjects, to the same effect as in the lady's last letters.

It will by this time be seen, that his whole merit with regard to this lady lies in doing justice to her excellencies both of mind and person, though to his own condemnation. Thus he begins his succeeding letter:

And now, Belford, will I give thee an account of our first breakfast conversation.

All sweetly serene and easy was the lovely brow and charming aspect of my goddess, on her descending among us; commanding reverence from every eye; a courtesy from every knee; and silence, awful silence, from every quivering lip: while she, armed with conscious worthiness and superiority, looked and behaved as an empress would look and behave among her vassals; yet with a freedom from pride and haughtiness, as if born to dignity, and to a behaviour habitually gracious.

He takes notice of the jealousy, pride, and vanity of Sally Martin and Polly Horton, on his respectful behaviour to the lady: *creatures who, brought up too high for their fortunes, and to a taste of pleasure, and the public diversions, had fallen an easy prey to his seducing arts* (as will be seen in the *conclusion* of this work): *and who, as he observes,* 'had not yet got over that distinction in their love which makes a woman prefer one man to another.'

How difficult is it, *says he*, to make a woman subscribe to a preference against herself, though ever so visible; especially where love is concerned! This violent, this partial little devil, Sally, has the insolence to compare herself with my angel—yet owns her to be an angel. I charge you, Mr. Lovelace, said she, show none of your extravagant acts of kindness before me to this sullen, this gloomy beauty—I cannot bear it. Then was I reminded of her first sacrifice.

What a rout do these women make about nothing at all! Were it not for what the *learned bishop*, in his letter from Italy, calls the entanglements of amour, and *I* the delicacies of intrigue, what is there, Belford, in all they can do for us?

How do these creatures endeavour to stimulate me! A fallen woman is a worse devil than even a profligate man. The former is incapable of remorse: that am not I—nor ever shall they prevail upon me, though aided by all the powers of darkness, to treat this admirable creature with indignity.—So far, I mean, as indignity can be separated from the trials which will prove her to be either woman or angel.

Yet with them I am a craven. I might have had her before now, if I would. If I would treat her as flesh and blood, I should find her such. They thought I knew, if any man living did, that if a man made a goddess of a woman, she would assume the goddess; that if power were given her, she would exert that power to the giver, if to nobody else: and D—r's wife is thrown into my dish, who, thou knowest, kept her ceremonious husband at haughty distance, and whined in private to her insulting footman. O how I cursed the blaspheming wretches! They will make me, as I tell them, hate

their house, and remove from it. And by my soul, Jack, I am ready at times to think that I should not have brought her hither, were it but on Sally's account. And yet, without knowing either Sally's heart, or Polly's, the dear creature resolves against having any conversation with them but such as she cannot avoid. I am not sorry for this, thou mayest think; since jealousy in woman is not to be concealed from woman. And Sally has no command of herself.

What dost think!—Here this little devil Sally, not being able, as she told me, to support life under my displeasure, was going into a fit: but when I saw her *preparing* for it, I went out of the room; and so she thought it would not be worth her while to show away.

In this manner he mentions what his meaning was in making the lady the compliment of his absence:

As to leaving her; if I go but for *one* night, I have fulfilled my promise: and if she think not, I can mutter and grumble, and yield again, and make a merit of it; and then, unable to live out of her presence, soon return. Nor are women ever angry at bottom for being disobeyed through excess of love. They like an uncontrollable passion. They like to have every favour ravished from them; and to be eaten and drank quite up by a voracious lover. Don't I know the sex?—Not so, indeed, as yet, my Clarissa: but, however, with *her* my frequent egresses will make me look new to her, and create little busy scenes between us. At the least, I may surely, without exception, salute her at parting and at return; and will not those occasional freedoms

(which civility will warrant) by degrees familiarize my charmer to them?

But here, Jack, what shall I do with my uncle and aunts, and all my loving cousins? For I understand that they are more in haste to have me married than I am myself.

LETTER LXII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Friday, April 28.

Mr. Lovelace is returned already. My brother's projects were his pretence. I could not but look upon this short absence as an evasion of his promise; especially as he had taken such precautions with the people below; and as he knew that I proposed to keep close within doors. I cannot bear to be dealt meanly with; and angrily insisted that he should directly set out for Berkshire, in order to engage his cousin, as he had promised.

O my dearest life, said he, why will you banish me from your presence? I cannot leave you for so long a time as you seem to expect I should. I have been hovering about town ever since I left you. Edgware was the furthest place I went to; and there I was not able to stay two hours, for fear, at this crisis, any thing should happen. Who can account for the workings of an apprehensive mind, when all that is dear and valuable to it is at stake? You may spare yourself the trouble of writing to any of your friends, till the solemnity has passed that shall entitle me to give weight to your application. When they know we are married, your brother's plots will be at an end; and your father and mother, and uncles, must be reconciled to you.

Why then should you hesitate a moment to confirm my happiness? Why, once more, would you banish me from you? Why will you not give the man, who has brought you into difficulties, and who so honourably wishes to extricate you from them, the happiness of doing so?

He was silent. My voice failed to second the inclination I had to say something not wholly discouraging to a point so warmly pressed.

I'll tell you, my angel, resumed he, what I propose to do, if you approve of it. I will instantly go out to view some of the handsome new squares or fine streets round them, and make a report to you of any suitable house I find to be let. I will take such a one as you shall choose, and set up an equipage befitting our condition. You shall direct the whole. And on some early day, either before or after we fix, [*it must be at your own choice*] be pleased to make me the happiest of men. And then will every thing be in a desirable train. You shall receive in your own house (if it can be so soon furnished as I wish) the compliments of all my relations. Charlotte shall visit you in the interim: and if it take up time, you shall choose whom you will honour with your company, first, second, or third in the summer months; and on your return you shall find all that was wanting in your new habitation supplied; and pleasures in a constant round shall attend us. O my angel, take me to you, instead of banishing me from you, and make me yours for ever.

You see, my dear, that here was no *day* pressed for, I was not uneasy about that; and the sooner recovered myself as there was not. But, however, I gave him no reason to upbraid me for refusing his offer of going in search of a house.

He is accordingly gone out for this purpose. But

I find that he intends to take up his lodging here to-night; and if to-night, no doubt on other nights, while he is in town. As the doors and windows of my apartment have good fastenings; as he has not, in all this time, given me cause for apprehension; as he has the pretence of my brother's schemes to plead; as the people below are very courteous and obliging; Miss Horton especially, who seems to have taken a great liking to me, and to be of a gentler temper and manners than Miss Martin; and as we are now in a tolerable way—I imagine it would look particular to them all, and bring me into a debate with a man, who (let him be set upon what he will) has always a great deal to say for himself, if I were to insist upon his promise: on all these accounts, I think, I will take no notice of his lodging here, if he don't—let me know, my dear, your thoughts of every thing.

You may believe I gave him back his bank note the moment I saw him.

Friday evening.

Mr. Lovelace has seen two or three houses; but none to his mind. But he has heard of one which looks promising, he says, and which he is to inquire about in the morning.

Saturday morning.

He has made his inquiries, and actually seen the house he was told of last night. The owner of it is a young widow lady; who is inconsolable for the death of her husband; *Fretchville* her name. It is furnished quite in taste, every thing being new within these six months. He believes, if I like not the furniture, the use of it may be agreed for, with the house, for a time certain: but, if I like it, he will endeavour to take the one and purchase the other directly.

The lady sees nobody; nor are the best apart-

ments above-stairs to be viewed till she is either absent or gone into the country; which she talks of doing in a fortnight or three weeks at furthest; and to live there retired.

What Mr. Lovelace saw of the house (which were the saloon and two parlours) was perfectly elegant; and he was assured all is of a piece. The offices are also very convenient; coach-house and stables adjoining.

He shall be very impatient, he says, till I see the whole; nor will he, if he finds he can have it, look further till I have seen it, except any thing else offer to my liking. The price he values not.

He now does nothing but talk of the *ceremony;* but not indeed of the *day.* I don't want him to urge that—but I wonder he does not.

He has just now received a letter from Lady Betty Lawrance, by a particular hand; the contents principally relating to an affair she has in chancery. But in the postscript she is pleased to say very respectful things of me.

They are all impatient, she says, for the happy day being over; which they flatter themselves will *ensure his reformation.*

He hoped, he told me, that I would *soon* enable him to answer *their* wishes and *his own.*

But, my dear, although the opportunity was so inviting, he urged not for the *day.* Which is the *more extraordinary,* as he was so pressing for marriage before we came to town.

He was very earnest with me to give him, and four of his friends, my company on Monday evening, at a little collation. Miss Martin and Miss Horton, cannot, he says, be there, being engaged in a party of their own with two daughters of Colonel Solcombe, and two nieces of Sir Antony Holmes, upon an annual occasion. But Mrs. Sin-

clair will be present, and she gave him hope of the company of a young lady of very great fortune and merit, (Miss *Partington*) an heiress, to whom Colonel Sinclair, it seems, in his lifetime was guardian, and who therefore calls Mrs. Sinclair mamma.

I desired to be excused. He had laid me, I said, under a most disagreeable necessity of appearing as a married person, and I would see as few people as possible who were to think me so.

He would not urge it, he said, if I were *much* averse: but they were his select friends; men of birth and fortune: who longed to see me. It was true, he added, that they, as well as his friend Doleman, believed we were married: but they thought him under the restrictions that he had mentioned to the people below. I might be assured, he told me, that his politeness before them should be carried into the highest degree of reverence.

When he is set upon any thing, there is no knowing, as I have said heretofore, what one *can* do*. But I will not, if I can help it, be made a show of; especially to men of whose characters and principles I have no good opinion. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

Mr. Lovelace in his next letter gives an account of his quick return: of his reasons to the lady for it: of her displeasure upon it: and of her urging his absence from the safety she was in from the situation of the house, except she were to be traced out by his visits.

* See p. 326. See also Vol. II. p. 130.

I was confoundedly puzzled, *says he*, on this occasion, and on her insisting upon the execution of a too-ready offer which I made her to go down to Berks, to bring up my cousin Charlotte to visit and attend her. I made miserable excuses: and, fearing that they would be mortally resented, as her passion began to rise upon my saying Charlotte was delicate, which she took strangely wrong, I was obliged to screen myself behind the most solemn and explicit declarations.

He then repeats those declarations, to the same effect with the account she gives of them.

I began, *says he*, with an intention to keep my life of honour in view, in the declarations I made her; but, as it has been said of a certain orator in the House of Commons, who more than once, in a long speech, convinced himself as he went along, and concluded against the side he set out intending to favour, so I in earnest pressed without reserve for matrimony in the progress of my harangue, which state I little thought of urging upon her with so much strength and explicitness.

He then values himself upon the delay that his proposal of taking and furnishing a house must occasion.

He wavers in his resolutions whether to act honourably or not by a merit so exalted.

He values himself upon his own delicacy, in expressing his indignation against her friends, for supposing what he pretends his heart rises against them for presuming to suppose.

But have I not reason, *says he*, to be angry with her, for not praising me for this my delicacy; when

she is so ready to call me to account for the least failure in punctilio?—However, I believe I can excuse her too, upon this generous consideration [for *generous* I am sure it is, because it is against myself]; that her mind being the essence of delicacy, the least want of it shocks her; while the meeting with what is so very extraordinary to *me*, is too familiar to her to obtain her notice *as* an extraordinary.

He glories in the story of the house, and of the young widow possessor of it, Mrs. Fretchville he calls her; and leaves it doubtful to Mr. Belford, whether it be a real or a fictitious story.

He mentions his different proposals in relation to the ceremony which he so earnestly pressed for; and owns his artful intention in avoiding to name the day.

And now, *says he,* I hope soon to have an opportunity to begin my operations; since all is *halcyon* and security.

It is impossible to describe the dear creature's sweet and silent confusion, when I touched upon the matrimonial topics.

She *may* doubt. She *may* fear. The wise in all important cases will doubt, and will fear, till they are sure. But her apparent willingness to think well of a spirit so inventive, and so machinating, is a happy prognostic for me. O these reasoning ladies!—How I love these reasoning ladies!—'Tis all over with them when once love has crept into their hearts: for then will they employ all their reasoning powers to *excuse* rather than to *blame* the conduct of the *doubted* lover, let appearances against him be ever so strong.

Mowbray, Belton, and Tourville, long to see my

angel, and will be here. She has *refused* me; but *must be present* notwithstanding. So generous a spirit as mine is cannot enjoy its happiness without communication. If I raise not your envy and admiration both at once, but half-joy will be the joy of having such a charming fly entangled in my web. She therefore must comply. And thou must come. And then will I show thee the pride and glory of the Harlowe family, my implacable enemies; and thou shalt join with me in my triumph over them all.

I know not what may still be the perverse beauty's fate: I want thee therefore to see and admire her, while she is serene and full of hopes: before her apprehensions are realized, if realized they are to be; and if evil apprehensions of me she really has: before her beamy eyes have lost their lustre: while yet her charming face is surrounded with all its virgin glories; and before the plough of disappointment has thrown up furrows of distress upon every lovely feature.

If I can procure you this honour, you will be ready to laugh out, as I have often much ado to forbear, at the puritanical behaviour of the mother before this lady. Not an oath, not a curse, nor the least free word, escapes her lips. She minces in her gait. She prims up her horse-mouth. Her voice, which, when she pleases, is the voice of thunder, is sunk into an humble whine. Her stiff hams, that have not been bent to a civility for ten years past, are now limbered into courtesies three deep at every word. Her fat arms are crossed before her; and she can hardly be prevailed upon to sit in the presence of my goddess.

I am drawing up instructions for ye all to observe on Monday night.

Saturday night.

Most confoundedly alarmed!—Lord, sir, what do you think? cried Dorcas—my lady is resolved to go to church to-morrow! I was at quadrille with the women below—To church! said I; and down I laid my cards. *To church!* repeated they, each looking upon the other. We had done playing for *that* night.

Who could have dreamt of such a whim as this?—Without notice! without questions! Her clothes not come! No leave asked!—Impossible she should think of being *my wife!* Besides, she don't consider, if she go to church I must go too!—Yet not to ask for my company!—Her brother and Singleton ready to snap her up, as far as she knows!—Known by her clothes—her person, her features, so distinguished!—Not such another woman in England! To church of all places!—Is the devil in the girl? said I, as soon as I could speak.

Well, but to leave this subject till to-morrow morning, I will now give you the instructions I have drawn up for yours and your companions' behaviour on Monday night.

Instructions to be observed by John Belford, Richard Mowbray, Thomas Belton, and James Tourville, Esquires of the Body to General Robert Lovelace, on their admission to the presence of his goddess.

Ye must be sure to let it sink deep into your heavy heads, that there is no such lady in the world as Miss Clarissa Harlowe; and that she is neither more nor less than Mrs. Lovelace, though at present, to my shame be it spoken, a virgin.

Be mindful also, that your old mother's name, after that of *her* mother when a maid, is Sinclair:

that her husband was a lieutenant-colonel, and all that *you*, Belford, know from honest Doleman's letter of her *, that let your brethren know.

Mowbray and Tourville, the two greatest blunderers of the four, I allow to be acquainted with the widow and nieces, from the knowledge they had of the colonel. They will not forbear familiarities of speech to the mother, as of longer acquaintance than a day. So I have suited their parts to their capacities. They may praise the widow and the colonel for people of great honour—but not too grossly; nor to labour the point so as to render themselves suspected.

The mother will lead ye into her own and the colonel's praises; and Tourville and Mowbray may be both her vouchers—I and you, and Belton, must be only hearsay confirmers.

As poverty is generally suspectible, the widow must be got handsomely aforehand: and no doubt but she is. The elegance of her house and furniture, and her readiness to discharge all demands upon her, which she does with ostentation enough, and which makes her neighbours, I suppose, like her the better, demonstrate this. She will propose to do handsome things by her two nieces. Sally is near marriage—with an eminent woollen-draper in the Strand, if ye have a mind to it; for there are five or six of them there.

The nieces may be inquired after, since they will be absent, as persons respected by Mowbray and Tourville, for their late worthy uncle's sake.

Watch ye diligently every turn of my countenance: every motion of my eye; for in my eye and in my countenance will ye find a sovereign regulator. I need not bid you respect me mightily:

* See p. 195, & seq.

your allegiance obliges you to that: and who that sees me, respects me not?

Priscilla Partington (for her looks so innocent, and discretion so deep, yet seemingly so softly) may be greatly relied upon. She will accompany the mother, gorgeously dressed, with all her Jew's extravagance flaming out upon her; and first, *induce*, then *countenance*, the lady. She has her cue, and I hope will make her acquaintance coveted by my charmer.

Miss Partington's history is this: the daughter of Colonel Sinclair's brother-in-law: that brother-in-law may have been a Turkey merchant, or any merchant, who died confoundedly rich: the colonel one of her guardians [*collateral credit in that to the old one*]: whence she always calls Mrs. Sinclair *mamma;* though not succeeding to the trust.

She is just come to pass a day or two, and then to return to her surviving guardian's at Barnet.

Miss Partington has suitors a little hundred (her grandmother, an alderman's dowager, having left her a great additional fortune); and is not trusted out of her guardian's house, without an old gouvernante noted for discretion, except to her mamma Sinclair; with whom now-and-then she is permitted to be for a week together.

Pris. will mamma-up Mrs. Sinclair, and will undertake to court her guardian to let her pass a delightful week with her—Sir Edward Holden, he may as well be, if your shallow pates will not be clogged with too many circumstantials. Lady Holden, perhaps, will come with her; for she always delighted in her mamma Sinclair's company: and talks of her, and her good management, twenty times a day.

Be it principally thy part, Jack, who art a pa-

rading fellow, and aimest at wisdom, to keep thy brother-varlets from blundering; for, as thou must have observed from what I have written, we have the most watchful and most penetrating lady in the world to deal with: a lady worth deceiving! but whose eyes will pierce to the bottom of your shallow souls the moment she hears you open. Do thou therefore place thyself between Mowbray and Tourville: their toes to be played upon and commanded by thine, if they go wrong: thy elbows to be the ministers of approbation.

As to your general behaviour; no hypocrisy!—I hate it: so does my charmer. If I had studied for it, I believe I *could* have been an hypocrite: but my general character is so well known, that I should have been suspected at once, had I aimed at making myself too white. But what necessity can there be for hypocrisy, unless the generality of the sex were to *refuse* us for our immoralities? the best of them love to have the credit of reforming us. Let the sweet souls try for it: if they fail, their intent was good. That will be a consolation to them. And as to *us*, our work will be the easier; our sins the fewer: since they will draw themselves in with a very little of our help; and we shall save a parcel of cursed falsehoods, and appear to be what we *are* both to angels and men.—Meantime their very grandmothers will acquit us, and reproach them with their *self-do, self-have;* and as having *erred against knowledge,* and ventured against *manifest appearances.* What folly therefore for men of our character to be hypocrites!

Be sure to instruct the rest, and do thou thyself remember not to talk obscenely. You know I never permitted any of you to talk obscenely. Time enough for that, when ye grow old, and can

ONLY talk. Besides, ye must consider Prisc.'s *affected* character, my goddess's *real* one. Far from obscenity therefore, do not so much as touch upon the double-entendre. What! as I have often said, cannot you touch a lady's heart, without wounding her ear?

It is *necessary*, that ye should appear worse men than myself. You cannot help appearing so, you'll say. Well then, there will be the less restraint upon you—the less restraint, the less affectation.—And if Belton begins his favourable subject in behalf of *keeping*, it may make me take upon myself to oppose him: but fear not; I shall not give the argument all my force.

She must have some curiosity, I think, to see what sort of men my companions are: she will not expect any of you to be saints. Are you not men born to considerable fortunes, although ye are not all of you men of parts? who is it in this mortal life, that *wealth does not mislead?* And as it gives people the *power of being mischievous*, does it not require great virtue to forbear the use of that power? Is not the devil said to be the God of this world? Are we not children of this world? Well then! let me tell thee my opinion—it is this: That were it not for the *poor* and the *middling*, the world would probably, long ago, have been destroyed by fire from heaven. Ingrateful wretches the rest, thou wilt be apt to say, to make such sorry returns, as they generally do make, to the *poor* and the *middling*.

This dear lady is prodigiously learned in *theories*. But as to *practics*, as to *experimentals*, must be, as you know from her tender years, a mere novice. Till she knew me, I dare say, she did not believe, whatever she had read, that there were such fellows in the world, as she will see in

you four. I shall have much pleasure in observing how she'll stare at her company, when she finds me the politest man of the five.

And so much for instructions general and particular for your behaviour on Monday night.

And let me add, that you must attend to every minute circumstance, whether you think there be reason in it, or not. Deep, like golden ore, frequently lies my meaning, and richly worth digging for. The hint of *least* moment, as *you* may imagine it, is often pregnant with events of the *greatest*. Be implicit. Am not I your general? did I ever lead you on that I brought you not off with safety and success, sometimes to your own stupid astonishment?

And now, methinks, thou art curious to know, what can be my view in risking the displeasure of my fair-one, and alarming her fears, after four or five halcyon days have gone over our heads? I'll satisfy thee.

The visitors of the two nieces will crowd the house. Beds will be scarce. Miss Partington, a sweet modest genteel girl, will be prodigiously taken with my charmer; will want to begin a friendship with her. A share in her bed, for one night only, will be requested. Who knows, but on that very Monday night I may be so unhappy as to give *mortal offence* to my beloved? *the shiest birds may be caught napping.* Should she *attempt to fly me* upon it, cannot I *detain her?* should she *actually fly*, cannot I *bring her back* by authority civil or uncivil, if I have evidence upon evidence that she acknowledged, though but tacitly, her marriage?—and *should I, or should I not* succeed, and she *forgive me*, or if she but descend to *expostulate*, or if she *bear me in her sight*; then will she be all my own. All delicacy is my charmer. I

long to see how such a delicacy, on *any* of these occasions, will behave, and in my situation it behoves me to provide against every accident.

I must take care, knowing what an eel I have to deal with, that the little wriggling rogue does not slip through my fingers. How silly should I look staring after her, when she had shot from me into the muddy river, her family, from which with so much difficulty I have taken her!

Well then; here are—let me see—how many persons are there who, after Monday night, will be able to swear, that she has gone by my name, answered to my name, had no other view in leaving her friends, but to go by my name? her own relations neither able nor willing to deny it.—First, here are *my* servants; her servant Dorcas; Mrs. Sinclair; Mrs. Sinclair's two nieces; and Miss Partington.

But for fear these evidences should be suspected, here comes the jet of the business—'No less than four worthy gentlemen of fortune and family, who were all in company such a night particularly, at a collation to which they were invited by Robert Lovelace, of Sandoun-hall in the county of Lancaster, Esquire, in company with Magdalen Sinclair, widow, and Priscilla Partington, spinster, and the lady complainant, when the said Robert Lovelace addressed himself to the said lady, on a multitude of occasions, as *his* wife; as they and others did, as Mrs. Lovelace: every one complimenting and congratulating her upon her nuptials; and that she received such their compliments and congratulations with no other visible displeasure or repugnance, than such as a young bride, full of blushes and pretty confusion, might be supposed to express upon such contemplative revolvings as those compliments would naturally inspire.' Nor

do thou rave at me, Jack, nor *rebel* :—Dost think I brought the dear creature hither for nothing?

And here's a faint sketch of my plot.—Stand by, varlets—tanta-ra-ra-ra!—Veil your bonnets, and confess your master!

LETTER LXIII.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday.

HAVE been at church, Jack—behaved admirably well too! My charmer is pleased with me now: for I was exceedingly attentive to the discourse, and very ready in the auditor's part of the service.—Eyes did not much wander. How could they, when the loveliest object, infinitely the loveliest in the whole church, was in my view!

Dear creature! how fervent, how amiable, in her devotions! I have got her to own *that she prayed for me.* I hope a prayer from so excellent a mind will not be made in vain.

There is, after all, something beautifully solemn in devotion. The sabbath is a charming institution to *keep* the heart right, when it *is* right. One day in seven, how reasonable!—I think I'll go to church once a day often. I fancy it will go a great way towards making me a reformed man. To see multitudes of well-appearing people all joining in one reverend act: an exercise how worthy of a rational being! Yet it adds a sting or two to my former stings, when I think of my projects with regard to this charming creature. In my conscience, I believe if I were to go constantly to church, I could not pursue them.

I had a scheme come into my head while there: but I will renounce it, because it obtruded itself upon me in so good a place. Excellent creature! How many *ruins* has she prevented by attaching me to herself; by engrossing my whole attention!

But let me tell thee what passed between us in my first visit of this morning; and then I will acquaint thee more largely with my good behaviour at church.

I could not be admitted till after eight. I found her ready prepared to go out. I pretended to be ignorant of her intention, having charged Dorcas not to own that she had told me of it.

Going abroad, madam?—with an air of indifference.

Yes, sir; I intend to go to church.

I hope, madam, I shall have the honour to attend you.

No: she designed to take a chair, and go to the next church.

This startled me: a chair to carry her to the next church from Mrs. Sinclair's, her right name not Sinclair, and to bring her back hither in the face of people who might not think well of the house!—There was no permitting that. Yet I was to appear indifferent. But said, I should take it for a favour, if she would permit me to attend her in a coach, as there was time for it, to St. Paul's.

She made objections to the gaiety of my dress; and told me, that if she went to St. Paul's, she could go in a coach without *me*.

I objected Singleton and her brother, and offered to dress in the plainest suit I had.

I beg the favour of attending you, dear madam, said I. I have not been at church a great while: we shall sit in different stalls: and the next time I

go, I hope it will be to give myself a title to the greatest blessing I can receive.

She made some further objections: but at last permitted me the honour of attending her.

I got myself placed in her eye, that the time might not seem tedious to me; for we were there early. And I gained her good opinion, as I mentioned above, by my behaviour.

The subject of the discourse was particular enough: it was about a prophet's story or parable of an ewe-lamb taken by a rich man from a poor one, who dearly loved it, and whose only comfort it was: designed to strike remorse into David, on his adultery with Uriah's wife Bathsheba, and his murder of the husband. These women, Jack, have been the occasion of all manner of mischief from the beginning! Now, when David, full of indignation, swore [King David would swear, Jack: but how shouldst thou know who King David was? The story is in the Bible] that the rich man should surely die; Nathan, which was the prophet's name, and a good ingenious fellow, cried out, (which were the words of the text) *Thou art the man!*—By my soul I thought the parson looked directly at me: and at that moment I cast my eye full on my ewe-lamb. But I must tell thee too, that I thought a good deal of my Rosebud.—A better man than King David in *that* point, however, thought I!

When we came home we talked upon the subject; and I showed my charmer my attention to the discourse, by letting her know where the doctor made the most of his subject, and where it might have been touched to greater advantage: for it is really a very affecting story, and has as pretty a contrivance in it as ever I read. And this I did in such a grave way, that she seemed more and more pleased with me; and I have no doubt,

that I shall get her to favour me to-morrow night with her company at my collation.

Sunday evening.

WE all dined together in Mrs. Sinclair's parlour. All *excessively* right! The two nieces have topped their parts; Mrs. Sinclair hers. Never so easy as now!—'She really thought a little oddly of these people at first, she said: Mrs. Sinclair seemed very forbidding! Her nieces were persons with whom she could not wish to be acquainted. But really we should not be too hasty in our censures. Some people improve upon us. The widow seems *tolerable*.' She went no further than *tolerable*. 'Miss Martin and Miss Horton are young people of good sense, and have read a great deal. What Miss Martin particularly said of marriage, and of her humble servant, was very solid. She believes with such notions she cannot make a bad wife.'—I have said Sally's humble servant is a woollen-draper of great reputation; and she is soon to be married.

I have been letting her into thy character, and into the characters of my other three esquires, in hopes to excite her curiosity to see you to-morrow night. I have told her some of the *worst*, as well as *best* parts of your characters, in order to exalt myself, and to obviate any sudden surprises, as well as to teach her, what sort of men she may expect to see, if she will oblige me with her company.

By her after-observations upon each of you, I shall judge what I may or may not do to *obtain* or *keep* her good opinion; what she will *like*, or what *not*; and so pursue the one, or avoid the other, as I see proper.—So, while she is penetrating into your shallow heads, I shall enter *her* heart, and know what to bid *my own* to hope for.

The house is to be taken in three weeks: all will be over in three weeks, or bad will be my luck!—Who knows but in three days?—Have I not carried that great point of making her pass for my wife to the people below? And that other great one, of fixing myself here night and day?—What woman ever escaped me, who lodged under one roof with me?—The house too, THE house; the people, people after my own heart: her servants, Will, and Dorcas, both *my* servants—*three days* did I say! Pho! pho! pho!—*Three hours!*

* * *

I HAVE carried my third point; but so extremely to the dislike of my charmer, that I have been threatened, for suffering Miss Partington to be introduced to her without her leave. Which laid her under a necessity to deny or comply with the urgent request of so fine a young lady; who had engaged to honour me at my collation, on condition that my beloved would be present at it.

To be obliged to appear before my friends as what she was not! She was for insisting, that I should acquaint the women here with the truth of the matter; and not go on propagating stories for her to countenance; making her a sharer in my guilt.

But what points will not perseverance carry? especially when it is covered over with the face of yielding *now*, and, Parthian like, returning to the charge *anon*. Do not the sex carry all their points with their men by the same methods? Have I conversed with them so freely as I have done, and learnt nothing of them? Didst thou ever know that a woman's denial of any favour, whether the least or the greatest, that my heart was set upon, stood her in any stead? The more perverse she, the more steady I; that is my rule.

But the point thus so much against her will carried, I doubt thou wilt see in her more of a sullen than of an obliging charmer. For when Miss Partington was withdrawn, "What was Miss Partington to her? In her situation she wanted no new acquaintance. And what were my four friends to her in her present circumstances? She would assure me, if ever again"—and there she stopped, with a twirl of her hand.

When we meet, I will, in her presence, tipping thee a wink, show thee the motion, for it was a very pretty one. Quite new. Yet have I seen an hundred pretty passionate twirls too, in my time, from other fair ones. How universally engaging it is to put a woman of sense, to whom a man is not married, in a passion, let the reception given to every ranting scene in our plays testify. Take care, my charmer, now thou art come to delight me with thy angry twirls, that thou temptest me not to provoke a *variety of them* from one, whose every motion, whose every air, carries in it so much sense and soul.

But, angry or pleased, this charming creature must be all loveliness. Her features are all harmony, and made for one another. No other feature could be substituted in the place of any one of hers, but must abate of her perfection: and think you that I do not long to have your opinion of my fair prize?

If you love to see features that glow, though the heart is frozen, and never yet was thawed; if you love fine sense, and adages flowing through teeth of ivory, and lips of coral; an eye that penetrates all things; a voice that is harmony itself; an air of grandeur, mingled with a sweetness that cannot be described; a politeness that, if ever equalled,

was never excelled—you'll see all these excellencies, and ten times more, in this my GLORIANA.

Mark her majestic fabric!—She's a temple
Sacred by birth, and built by hands divine;
Her soul the deity that lodges there:
Nor is the pile unworthy of the god.

Or, to describe her in a softer style with Rowe,

The bloom of op'ning flow'rs, unsully'd beauty,
Softness, and sweetest innocence she wears,
And looks like nature in the world's first spring.

Adieu, varlets four!—At six on Monday evening I expect ye all.

LETTER LXIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Sunday, April 30.

Mr. Lovelace in his last letters having taken notice of the most material passages contained in this letter, the following extracts from it are only inserted. She gives pretty near the same account that he does of what passed between them on her resolution to go to church; and of his proposal of St. Paul's, and desire of attending her. She praises his good behaviour there; as also the discourse, and the preacher: is pleased with its seasonableness: gives particulars of the conversation between them afterwards, and commends the good observations he made upon the sermon.

I AM willing, says she, to have hopes of him: but am so unable to know how to depend upon his seriousness for an hour together, that all my favourable accounts of him in this respect must be taken with allowance.

Being very much pressed, I could not tell how to refuse dining with the widow and her nieces this day. I am better pleased with them, than I ever thought I should be. I cannot help blaming myself for my readiness to give severe censures, where reputation is concerned. People's ways, humours, constitutions, education, and opportunities allowed for, my dear, many persons, as far as I know, may appear blameless, whom others of different humours and educations are too apt to blame; and who, from the same fault, may be as ready to blame *them.* I will therefore make it a rule to myself for the future, never to judge peremptorily on first appearances. But yet I must observe that these are not people I should choose to be intimate with, or whose ways I can like: although, for the stations they are in, they may go through the world with tolerable credit.

Mr. Lovelace's behaviour has been such, as makes me call this, so far as it is passed, an agreeable day. Yet, when easiest as to him, my situation with my friends takes place in my thoughts, and causes me many a tear.

I am the more pleased with the people of the house, because of the persons of rank they are acquainted with, and who visit them.

Sunday evening.

I am still well pleased with Mr. Lovelace's behaviour. We have had a good deal of serious discourse together. The man has really just and good notions. He confesses how much he is pleased with this day, and hopes for many such. Nevertheless, he ingenuously warned me, that his unluckly vivacity might return: but he doubted not, that he should be fixed at last by my example and conversation.

He has given me an entertaining account of the

four gentlemen he is to meet to-morrow night: *entertaining*, I mean, for his humorous description of their persons, manners, &c. but such a description as is far from being to their praise: yet he seemed rather to design to divert my melancholy by it, than to degrade them. I think at bottom, my dear, that he must be a good-natured man; but that he was spoiled young for want of check or control.

I cannot but call this, my circumstances considered, an happy day to the end of it. Indeed, my dear, I think I could prefer him to all the men I ever knew, were he but to be always what he has been this day. You see how ready I am to own all you have charged me with, when I find myself out. It is a difficult thing, I believe, sometimes, for a young creature that is able to deliberate with herself, to know when she loves, or when she hates: but I am resolved, as much as possible, to be determined both in my hatred and love by *actions*, as they make the man worthy or unworthy.

She dates again on Monday, and declares herself highly displeased at Miss Partington's being introduced to her: and still more for being obliged to promise to be present at Mr. Lovelace's collation. She foresees, she says, a murdered evening.

LETTER LXV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Monday night, May 1.

I HAVE just escaped from the very disagreeable company I was obliged, so much against my will, to be in. As a very particular relation of this evening's conversation would be painful to me,

you must content yourself with what you shall be able to collect from the outlines, as I may call them, of the characters of the persons; assisted by the little histories Mr. Lovelace gave me of each yesterday.

The names of the gentlemen are Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and Belford. These four, with Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Partington, the great heiress mentioned in my last, Mr. Lovelace, and myself, made up the company.

I gave you before the favourable side of Miss Partington's character, such as it was given me by Mrs. Sinclair, and her nieces. I will now add a few words from my own observation upon her behaviour in *this* company.

In *better* company perhaps she would have appeared to less disadvantage: but, notwithstanding her *innocent looks*, which Mr. Lovelace also highly praised, he is the last person whose judgment I would take upon real modesty. For I observed, that, upon some talk from the gentlemen, not free enough to be openly censured, yet too indecent in its implication to come from well-bred persons, in the company of virtuous people, this young lady was very ready to apprehend; and yet, by smiles and simperings, to encourage, rather than discourage, the culpable freedoms of persons, who, in what they went out of their way to say, must either be guilty of absurdity, meaning *nothing*; or meaning *something* of rudeness *.

But indeed I have seen women, of whom I had a better opinion, than I can say I have of Mrs. Sinclair, who have allowed *gentlemen*, and *themselves*

* Mr. Belford in Letter lvi. of Vol. IV. reminds Mr. Lovelace of some particular topics which passed in their conversation, extremely to the lady's honour.

too, in greater liberties of this sort, than I have thought consistent with that purity of manners which ought to be the distinguishing characteristic of our sex: for what are *words*, but the *body* and *dress* of *thought?* And is not the mind of a person strongly indicated by its outward dress?

But to the *gentlemen*; as they must be called in right of their ancestors, it seems; for no other do they appear to have:

Mr. Belton has had university education, and was designed for the gown; but that not suiting with the gaiety of his temper, and an uncle dying, who devised to him a good estate, he quitted the college, came up to town, and commenced fine gentleman. He is said to be a man of sense.—Mr. Belton dresses gaily, but not quite foppishly: drinks hard; keeps all hours, and glories in doing so; games, and has been hurt by that pernicious diversion: he is about thirty years of age: his face is of a fiery red, somewhat bloated and pimply; and his irregularities threaten a brief duration to the sensual dream he is in: for he has a short consumptive cough, which seems to denote bad lungs; yet makes himself and his friends merry by his stupid and inconsiderate jests upon very threatening symptoms which ought to make him more serious.

Mr. Mowbray has been a great traveller; speaks as many languages as Mr. Lovelace himself, but not so fluently: is of a good family; seems to be about thirty-three or thirty-four: tall and comely in his person: bold and daring in his look: is a large-boned strong man: has a great scar in his forehead, with a dent, as if his scull had been beaten in there; and a seamed scar in his right cheek.—He dresses likewise very gaily: has his servants always about him, whom he is continually

calling upon, and sending on the most trifling messages; half a dozen instances of which we had in the little time I was among them; while they seem to watch the turn of his fierce eye, to be ready to run, before they have half his message, and serve him with fear and trembling. Yet to his equals the man seems tolerable: he talks not amiss upon public entertainments and diversions; especially upon those abroad: yet has a romancing air: and avers things strongly, which seem quite improbable. Indeed, he *doubts* nothing, but what he ought to *believe*: for he jests upon sacred things; and professes to hate the clergy of all religions. He has high notions of *honour*, a word hardly ever out of his mouth; but seems to have no great regard to *morals*.

Mr. Tourville occasionally told his age; just turned of thirty-one. He is also of an ancient family; but in his person and manners, more of what I call the coxcomb, than any of his companions. He dresses richly; would be thought elegant in the choice and fashion of what he wears: yet, after all, appears rather tawdry than fine. One sees by the care he takes of his outside, and the notice he bespeaks from *every one* by his *own* notice of himself, that the inside takes up the least of his attention. He dances finely, Mr. Lovelace says: is a master of music; and singing is one of his principal excellencies. They prevailed upon him to sing; and he obliged them both in Italian and French; and, to do him justice, his songs in both were decent. They were all highly delighted with his performance; but his greatest admirers were, Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Partington, and *himself*. To me he appeared to have a great deal of affectation.

Mr. Tourville's conversation and address are in-

sufferably full of those really gross affronts upon the understanding of our sex, which the moderns call *compliments*, and are intended to pass for so many instances of good breeding, though the most hyperbolical, unnatural stuff that can be conceived, and which can only serve to show the insincerity of the *complimenter*, and the ridiculous light in which the *complimented* appears in his eyes, if he supposes a woman capable of relishing the romantic absurdities of his speeches.

He affects to introduce into his common talk Italian and French words; and often answers an English question in French, which language he greatly prefers, to the barbarously hissing English. But then he never fails to translate into this his *odious* native tongue the words and the sentences he speaks in the other two—lest, perhaps, it should be questioned whether he understands what he says.

He loves to tell stories: always calls them *merry, facetious, good,* or *excellent,* before he begins, in order to bespeak the attention of the hearers; but never gives himself concern in the *progress* or *conclusion* of them, to make good what he promises in his *preface.* Indeed he seldom brings any of them to a conclusion; for if his company have patience to hear him out, he breaks in upon himself by so many parenthetical intrusions, as one may call them, and has so many incidents springing in upon him, that he frequently drops his own thread, and sometimes sits down satisfied half way; or, if at other times he would resume it, he applies to his company to help him in again, with a *devil fetch him* if he remembers what he was driving at—but enough, and too much of Mr. Tourville.

Mr. Belford is the fourth gentleman, and one of whom Mr. Lovelace seems more fond than any of the rest; for he is a man of tried bravery, it

seems; and this pair of friends came acquainted upon occasion of a quarrel (possibly about a woman) which brought on a challenge, and a meeting at Kensington Gravel-pits; which ended without unhappy consequences, by the mediation of three gentlemen strangers, just as each had made a pass at the other.

Mr. Belford it seems is about seven or eight-and-twenty. He is the youngest of the five, except Mr. Lovelace: and they are perhaps the wickedest; for they seem to lead the other three as they please. Mr. Belford, as the others, dresses gaily; but has not those advantages of person, nor from his dress, which Mr. Lovelace is too proud of. He has, however, the appearance and air of a gentleman. He is well read in classical authors, and in the best English poets and writers: and, by his means, the conversation took now-and-then a more agreeable turn: and I, who endeavoured to put the best face I could upon my situation, as I passed for Mrs. Lovelace with them, made shift to join in it, at such times, and received abundance of compliments from all the company, on the observations I made *.

Mr. Belford seems good-natured and obliging; and, although very complaisant, not so fulsomely so as Mr. Tourville; and has a polite and easy manner of expressing his sentiments on all occasions. He seems to delight in a logical way of argumentation, as also does Mr. Belton. These two attacked each other in this way; and both looked at us women, as if to observe whether we did not admire their learning, or, when they had said a smart thing, their wit. But Mr. Belford had visibly the advantage of the other, having quicker parts,

* See Letter lvi. of Vol. IV. above referred to.

and by taking the worst side of the argument, seemed to *think* he had. Upon the whole of his behaviour and conversation, he put me in mind of that character in Milton:

——————His tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels; for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious: but to nobler deeds
Tim'rous and slothful:—yet he pleased the ear.

How little soever matters in general may be to our liking, we are apt, when hope is strong enough to permit it, to endeavour to make the best we can of the lot we have drawn; and I could not but observe often, how much Mr. Lovelace excelled all his four friends in every thing they seemed desirous to excel in. But, as to wit and vivacity, he had no equal there. All the others gave up to him, when his lips began to open. The haughty Mowbray would call upon the prating Tourville for silence, and would elbow the supercilious Belton into attention, when Lovelace was going to speak. And when he had spoken, the words, Charming fellow! with a free word of admiration or envy, fell from every mouth.

He has indeed so many advantages in his person and manner, that what would be inexcusable in another, would, if one watched not over one's self, and did not endeavour to distinguish what is the essence of right and wrong, look becoming in him.

Mr. Belford, to my no small vexation and confusion, with the forwardness of a favoured and intrusted friend, singled me out, on Mr. Lovelace's being sent for down, to make me congratulatory compliments on my supposed nuptials; which he did with a caution, not to insist too long on the

rigorous vow I had imposed upon a man so universally admired—

'See him among twenty men,' said he, 'all of distinction, and nobody is regarded but Mr. Lovelace.'

It must, indeed, be confessed, that there is in his whole deportment a natural dignity, which renders all insolent or imperative demeanour as unnecessary as inexcusable. Then that deceiving sweetness which appears in his smiles, in his accent, in his whole aspect and address, when he thinks it worth his while to oblige or endeavour to attract, how does this show, that he was *born* innocent, as I may say; that he was not *naturally* the cruel, the boisterous, the impetuous creature; which the wicked company he may have fallen into have made him! For he has, besides, an open, and, I think, an honest countenance. Don't *you* think so, my dear? On all these specious appearances, have I founded my hopes of seeing him a reformed man.

But it is amazing to me, I own, that with so much of the gentleman, such a general knowledge of books and men, such a skill in the learned as well as modern languages, he can take so much delight as he does in the company of such persons as I have described, and in subjects of frothy impertinence, unworthy of his talents, and his natural and acquired advantages. I can think but of one reason for it, and that must argue a very low mind, his VANITY; which makes him desirous of being considered as the head of the people he consorts with. A man to love praise, yet to be content to draw it from such contaminated springs!

One compliment passed from Mr. Belford to Mr. Lovelace, which hastened my quitting the shocking company.—'You are a happy man, Mr. Love-

lace,' said he, upon some fine speeches made him by Mrs. Sinclair, and assented to by Miss Partington: 'you have so much courage and so much wit, that neither man nor woman can stand before you.'

Mr. Belford looked at me, when he spoke: yes, my dear, he smilingly looked at me: and he looked upon his complimented friend: and all their *assenting*, and therefore *affronting* eyes, both men's and women's, were turned upon your Clarissa: at least, my self-reproaching heart made me think so; for that would hardly permit my eye to look up.

Oh! my dear, were but a woman, who gives reason to the world to think her to be in love with a man, [and this must be believed to be my case: or to what can my *supposed* voluntary going off with Mr. Lovelace be imputed?] to reflect one moment on the exaltation she gives *him*, and the disgrace she brings upon *herself*; the low pity, the silent contempt, the insolent sneers and whispers, to which she makes herself obnoxious from a censuring world of both sexes; how would she despise herself! and how much more eligible would she think death itself than such a discovered debasement.

What I have thus in general touched upon, will account to you, why I could not more particularly relate what passed in this evening's conversation: which as may be gathered from what I have written, abounded with *approbatory* accusations, and *supposed* witty retorts.

LETTER LXVI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Monday midnight.

I AM very much vexed and disturbed at an odd incident. Mrs. Sinclair has just now left me; I believe in displeasure, on my declining to comply with a request she made me: which was, to admit Miss Partington to a share in my bed; her house being crowded by her nieces' guests and by their attendants, as well as by those of Miss Partington.

There might be nothing in it; and my denial carried a stiff and ill-natured appearance. But instantly upon her making the request, it came into my thought, ‘ that I was in a manner a stranger to every body in the house: not so much as a servant I could call my own, or of whom I had any great opinion: that there were four men of free manners in the house, *avowed* supporters of Mr. Lovelace in matters of offence; himself a man of enterprise; all, as far as I knew, (and as I had reason to think by their noisy mirth after I left them) drinking deeply: that Miss Partington herself is not so bashful a person as she was represented to me to be: that *officious pains* were taken to give me a good opinion of her: and that Mrs. Sinclair made a greater parade in prefacing the request, than such a request needed. To deny, thought I, can carry only an appearance of singularity to people who *already* think me singular. To consent, may possibly, if not probably, be attended with inconveniences. The consequences of the alternative so very disproportionate, I thought it more prudent to incur the censure, than to risk the inconvenience.’

I told her, that I was writing a long letter: that I should choose to write till I were sleepy: and that a companion would be a restraint upon me, and I upon her.

She was loth, she said, that so delicate a young creature, and so great a fortune as Miss Partington, should be put to lie with Dorcas in a press-bed. She should be very sorry if she had asked an improper thing. She had never been so put to it before. And Miss would stay up with *her* till I had done writing.

Alarmed at this urgency, and it being easier to persist in a denial *given*, than to give it at *first*, I said, Miss Partington should be welcome to my whole bed, and I would retire into the dining-room, and there, locking myself in, write all the night.

The poor thing, she said, was afraid to lie alone. To be sure Miss Partington would not put me to such an inconvenience.

She then withdrew: but returned; begged my pardon for returning: but the poor child, she said, was in tears. Miss Partington had never seen a young lady she so much admired, and so much wished to imitate, as me. The dear girl hoped that nothing had passed in her behaviour, to give me dislike to her.—Should she bring her to me?

I was very busy, I said. The letter I was writing was upon a very important subject. I hoped to see the young lady in the morning: when I would apologize to her for my particularity. And then Mrs. Sinclair hesitating and moving towards the door (though she turned round to me again), I desired her *(lighting her)* to take care how she went down.

Pray, madam, said she, on the stairs-head, don't give yourself all this trouble. God knows my heart, I meant no affront: but, since you seem to

take my freedom amiss, I beg you will not acquaint Mr. Lovelace with it; for he perhaps will think me bold and impertinent.

Now, my dear, is not this a particular incident: either as I have made it, or as it was designed? I don't love to do an uncivil thing. And if nothing were meant by the request, my refusal deserves to be called uncivil. Then I have shown a suspicion of vile usage by it, which surely dare not be meant. If *just,* I ought to apprehend every thing, and fly the house and the man as I would an infection. If *not just,* and if I cannot contrive to clear myself of having entertained suspicions, by assigning some other plausible reason for my denial, the very *staying here* will have an appearance not at all reputable to myself.

I am now out of humour with him, with myself, with all the world, but you. His companions are shocking creatures. Why, again I repeat, should he have been desirous to bring me into such company? Once more, I like him not. Indeed I do not like him!

LETTER LXVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Tuesday, May 2.

With infinite regret I am obliged to tell you, that I can write no longer to you, or receive letters from you. Your mother has sent me a letter inclosed in a cover to Mr. Lovelace, directed for him at Lord M.'s, (and which was brought him just now) reproaching me on this subject in very angry terms, and forbidding me, 'as I would not be

thought to intend to make her and you unhappy, to write to you without her leave.'

This, therefore, is the last you must receive from me till happier days: and as my prospects are not very bad, I presume we shall soon have leave to write again; and even to see each other; since an alliance with a family so honourable as Mr. Lovelace's is, will not be a disgrace.

She is pleased to write, 'that if I would wish to *inflame* you, I should let you know her written prohibition: but if otherwise, find some way of my own accord (without bringing *her* into the question) to decline a correspondence, which I must know she has for some time past forbidden.' But all I can say is, to beg of you *not* to be inflamed;—to beg of you not to let her *know*, or even by your behaviour to her on this occasion, *guess*, that I have acquainted you with my reason for declining to write to you. For how else, after the scruples I have heretofore made on this very subject, yet proceeding to correspond, can I honestly satisfy you about my motives for this sudden stop? So, my dear, I choose, you see, rather to rely upon your discretion, than to feign reasons with which you would not be satisfied, but, with your usual active penetration, sift to the bottom, and at last find me to be a mean and low qualifier; and that with an implication injurious to you, that I supposed you had not prudence enough to be trusted with the naked truth.

I repeat that my prospects are not bad. 'The house, I presume, will soon be taken. The people here are very respectful, notwithstanding my nicety about Miss Partington. Miss Martin, who is near marriage with an eminent tradesman in the Strand, just now, in a very respectful manner, asked my opinion of some patterns of rich silks for the oc-

casion. The widow has a less forbidding appearance than at first. Mr. Lovelace, on my declared dislike of his four friends, has assured me, that neither they nor any body else shall be introduced to me without my leave.'

These circumstances I mention (as you will suppose) that your kind heart may be at ease about me; that you may be induced by them to acquiesce with your mother's commands, (*cheerfully* acquiesce) and that for *my sake,* lest I should be thought an *inflamer;* who am, with very contrary intentions, my dearest and best-beloved friend,

Your ever obliged and affectionate,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER LXVIII.

MISS HOWE TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Wedn. May 3.

I AM astonished that my mother should take such a step—purely to exercise an unreasonable act of authority; and to oblige the most remorseless hearts in the world. If I find that I can be of use to you either by advice or information, do you think I will not give it!—Were it to any person, much *less* dear to me than you are, do you think, in such a case, I would forbear giving it?

Mr. Hickman, who pretends to a little casuistry in such nice matters, is of opinion, that I ought not to decline a correspondence thus circumstanced. And it is well he is; for my mother having set me up, I must have somebody to quarrel with.

This I will come into if it will make you easy—I will forbear to write to *you* for a few days, if nothing extraordinary happen, and till the rigour of

her prohibition is abated. But be assured, that I will not dispense with your writing to *me.* My heart, my conscience, my honour, will not permit it.

But how will I help myself!—How!—easily enough. For I do assure you, that I want but very little further provocation to fly privately to London. And if I do, I will not leave you till I see you either honourably married, or absolutely quit of the wretch: and in this last case, I will take you down with me, in defiance of the whole world: or, if you refuse to go with me, stay with you, and accompany you as your shadow whithersoever you go.

Don't be frighted at this declaration. There is but one consideration, and but one hope, that withhold me, watched as I am, in all my retirements; obliged to read to her without a voice; to work in her presence without fingers; and to lie with her every night against my will. The *consideration* is, lest you should apprehend that a step of this nature would look like a doubling of your fault, in the eyes of such as think your going away a fault. The *hope* is, that things will still end happily, and that some people will have reason to take shame to themselves for the sorry part they have acted. Nevertheless I am often balancing—but your resolving to give up the correspondence at this crisis, will turn the scale. *Write* therefore, or *take the consequence.*

A few words upon the subject of your last letters—I know not whether your brother's wise project be given up or not. A dead silence reigns in your family. Your brother was absent three days; then at home one; and is now absent: but whether with Singleton or not, I cannot find out.

By your account of your wretch's companions, I

see not but they are a set of *infernals*, and he the *Beelzebub*. What could he mean, as you say, by his earnestness to bring you into such company, and to give you such an opportunity to make him and them reflecting glasses to one another? The man's a *fool*, to be sure, my dear—a *silly fellow*, at least—the wretches must put on the *best* before you, no doubt,—lords of the creation!—Noble fellows these!—Yet who knows how many poor despicable souls of our sex the worst of them has had to whine after him!

You have brought an inconvenience upon yourself, as you observe, by your refusal of Miss Partington for your bed fellow. Pity you had not admitted her! Watchful as *you* are, what *could* have happened? If violence were intended, he would not stay for the *night*. You might have sat up after her, or not gone to bed. Mrs. Sinclair pressed it too far. You were over scrupulous.

If any thing happen to delay your nuptials, I would advise you to remove: but if you marry, perhaps you may think it no great matter to stay where you are, till you take possession of your own estate. The knot once tied, and with so resolute a man, it is my opinion, your relations will soon resign what they cannot legally hold: and, were even a litigation to follow, you will not be *able*, nor ought you to be *willing*, to help it: for your estate will then be his right; and it will be unjust to wish it to be withheld from him.

One thing I would advise you to think of: and that is, of proper settlements: it will be to the credit of your prudence and of his justice (and the more as matters stand) that something of this should be done before you marry. Bad as he is, nobody accounts him a sordid man. And I wonder he has hitherto been silent on that subject.

I am not displeased with his proposal about the widow lady's house. I think it will do very well. But if it must be three weeks before you can be certain about it, surely you need not put off his day for that space: and he may bespeak his equipages. Surprising to me as well as to you, that he could be so acquiescent.

I repeat—continue to write to me. I insist upon it; and as minutely as possible: or, take the consequence. I send this by a particular hand. I am, and ever will be,

Your most affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LXIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE TO MISS HOWE.

Thursday, May 4.

I FOREGO every other engagement, I suspend every wish, I banish every other fear, to take up my pen, to beg of you, that you will not think of being *guilty* of such an act of love as I can never thank you for; but must for ever regret. If I *must* continue to write to you, I must. I know full well your impatience of control, when you have the least imagination that your generosity or friendship is likely to be wounded by it.

My dearest, dearest creature, would you incur a maternal, as I have a paternal, malediction? Would not the world think there was an infection in my fault, if it were to be followed by Miss Howe? There are some points so flagrantly wrong, that they will not bear to be argued upon. This is one of them. I need *not* give reasons against such a rashness. Heaven forbid that it should be known

that you had it but once in your *thought*, be your motives ever so noble and generous, to follow so bad an example; the rather, as that you would, in such a case, want the extenuations that might be pleaded in my favour; and particularly that one of being *surprised* into the unhappy step.

The restraint your mother lays you under would not have appeared heavy to you but on my account. Would you have once thought it a hardship to be admitted to a part of her bed?—How did I use to be delighted with such a favour from *my* mother! How did I love to work in her presence!—So did you in the presence of yours once. And to read to her in winter evenings I know was one of your joys.—Do not give me cause to reproach *myself* on the reason that may be assigned for the change in *you*.

Learn, my dear, I beseech you learn, to subdue your own passions. Be the motives what they will, excess is excess. Those passions in our sex, which we take no pains to subdue, may have one and the same source with those infinitely blacker passions, which we used so often to condemn in the violent and headstrong of the other sex, and which may be only heightened in them by *custom*, and their *free education*. Let us both, my dear, ponder well this thought; look into ourselves, and fear.

If I write, as I find I must, I insist upon *your* forbearing to write. Your silence to *this* shall be the sign to me, that you will not think of the rashness you threaten me with; and that you will obey your mother as to *your own* part of the correspondence, however: especially, as you can inform and advise me in every weighty case by Mr. Hickman's pen.

My trembling writing will show you, my dear, impetuous creature, what a trembling heart you have given to

Your ever obliged,
Or, if you take so rash a step,
Your for ever disobliged,
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

My clothes were brought to me just now. But you have so much discomposed me, that I have no heart to look into the trunks. Why, why, my dear, will you fright me with your flaming love? Discomposure gives distress to a weak heart, whether it arise from friendship or enmity.

A servant of Mr. Lovelace carries this to Mr. Hickman for dispatch sake. Let that worthy man's pen relieve my heart from this new uneasiness.

LETTER LXX.

MR. HICKMAN TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*Sent to Wilson's by a particular hand.*]

MADAM, Friday, May 5.

I HAVE the honour of dear Miss Howe's commands, to acquaint you, without knowing the occasion, that she is excessively concerned for the concern she has given you in her last letter: and that, if you will but write to her, under cover as before, she will have no thoughts of what you are so very apprehensive about.—Yet she bid me write, 'That if she has but the *least* imagination that she can *serve* you, and *save* you,' those are her words, 'all

the censures of the world will be but of second consideration with her.' I have great temptations on this occasion to express my own resentments upon your present state; but not being fully apprised of what that is—only conjecturing from the disturbance upon the mind of the dearest lady in the world to me, and the most sincere of friends to you, that *that* is not altogether so happy as were to be wished; and being, moreover, forbid to enter into the cruel subject; I can only offer, *as I do*, my best and faithfullest services! and wish you a happy deliverance from all your troubles. For I am,

Most excellent young lady,

Your faithful and most obedient servant,

CH. HICKMAN.

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I. LOVELACE *to Belford.* In ecstasy on the success of his contrivances. Well as he loves Clarissa, he would show her no mercy, if he thought she preferred any man living to him. Will religiously observe the INJUNCTIONS she laid upon him previous to their meeting.

II. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* A recriminating conversation between her and Lovelace. He *reminds her of her injunctions;* and, instead of beseeching her to dispense with them, promises a sacred regard to them. It is not therefore *in her power,* she tells Miss Howe, to take her advice as to speedy marriage, [a note on the place, justifying her conduct, p. 13.] Chooses *not to go to any of his relations: and why.* Is attended by Mrs. Greme, Lord M.'s housekeeper at the Lawn, who waits on her to her sister Sorlings, with whom she consents to lodge. *His looks offend her.* Has written to her sister for her clothes.

III. *Lovelace to Belford.* Gives briefly the particulars of his success. Describes her person and dress on her first meeting him. Extravagant exultation. Makes Belford question him on the honour of his designs by her: answers doubtfully.

IV. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Her sentiments on her narrative. Her mother, at the instigation of Antony Harlowe, forbids their correspondence. Mr. Hickman's zeal to serve them in it. What her family now pretend, if she had not left them. How they took her supposed projected flight. Offers her money and clothes. Would have her seem to place some little confidence in Lovelace. *Her brother and sister will not permit her father and uncle to cool.*

V. VI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Advises her to obey her mother, who prohibits their correspondence. Declines to accept of her offers of money: and why. *Mr. Lovelace not a polite man.* She will be *as ready to place a confidence in him as he will be to deserve it.* Yet, tricked away by him as she was, cannot *immediately treat him with great complai-*

sance. Blames her for her liveliness to her mother.—Incloses the copy of her letter to her sister.

VII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Prides himself in his arts in the conversations between them. *Is alarmed at the superiority of her talents.* Considers opposition and resistance as a challenge to do his worst. His artful proceedings with Joseph Leman.

VIII. *From the same.* Men need only be *known* to be rakes, he says, to recommend themselves to the favour of the sex. Wishes Miss Howe were not so well acquainted with Clarissa: and why.

IX. *From the same.* Intends to set old Antony at Mrs. Howe, to prevent the correspondence between the two young ladies. *Girl,* not *gold,* his *predominant passion.* Rallies Belford on his person and appearance. Takes humorous notice of the two daughters of the widow Sorlings.

X. *From the same.* Further triumph over the Harlowes. Similitude of the spider and fly. Is for having separate churches as well as separate boarding-schools for the sexes. The women ought to love him, he says: and why. *Prides himself that they do.*

XI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Particulars of an angry conference with Lovelace. *Seeing her sincerely displeased,* he begs the ceremony may immediately pass. He construes her bashful silence into anger, and vows a *sacred regard to her injunctions.*

XII. XIII. XIV. *Lovelace to Belford.* The pleasure of a difficult chase. Triumphs in the distress and perplexity he gave her by his artful and parading offer of marriage.—His reasons for and against doing her justice. *Resolves to try her to the utmost.* The honour of the whole sex concerned in the issue of her trial. *Matrimony, he sees, is in his power, now she is.*

XV. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Will not obey her mother in her prohibition of their correspondence: and why. Is charmed with her spirit.

XVI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Knows not what she can do with Lovelace. He may thank himself for the trouble he has had on her account. *Did she ever,* she asks, *make him any promises? Did she ever receive him as a lover?*

XVII. XVIII. *From the same.* She calls upon Lovelace to give her a faithful account of the noise and voices she heard at the garden door, which frighted her away with him.

His confession, and daring hints in relation to Solmes, and her brother, and Betty Barnes. She is terrified.

XIX. *Lovelace to Belford.* Rejoices in the stupidity of the Harlowes. Exults in his capacity for mischief. The condescensions in which he intends to bring the lady. Libertine observations to the disadvantage of women; *which may serve as cautions to the sex.*

XX. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* A conversation with Mr. Lovelace wholly agreeable. His promises of reformation. She remembers *to his advantage*, his generosity to his Rosebud and his tenants. Writes to her aunt Hervey.

XXI. XXII. *Lovelace to Belford.* His acknowledged vanity. Accounts for his plausible behaviour, and specious promises and proposals. Apprehensive of the correspondence between Miss Howe and Clarissa. *Loves to plague him with out-of-the-way words and phrases.*

XXIII. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* How to judge of Lovelace's specious proposals and promises. Hickman devoted to their service. Yet she treats him with ridicule.

XXIV. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Lovelace complains, she hears, to Mrs. Greme, *of her adhering to her injunctions.* What means he by it, she asks, yet *forego such opportunities as he has had?* She is punished for her vanity in hoping to be an example. Blames Miss Howe for her behaviour to Hickman.

XXV. *From the same.* Warm dialogues with Lovelace. She is displeased with him for his *affectedly bashful hints of matrimony.* Mutual recriminations. He looks upon her as his, she says, by a strange sort of obligation, *for having run away with her against her will.* Yet *but touches on the edges of matrimony neither.* She is sick of herself.

XXVI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Mr. Lovelace a perfect Proteus. He now applauds her for that treatment of him which before he had resented; and communicates to her two letters, one from Lady Betty Lawrance, the other from Miss Montague. She wonders that he did not produce those letters before, as he must know they would be highly acceptable to her.

XXVII. XXVIII. XXIX. XXX. *From the same.* The contents of the letters from Lady Betty and Miss Montague put Clarissa in good humour with Mr. Lovelace. He hints at marriage; but pretends *to be afraid of pursuing the hint.* She is earnest with him to leave her: and why. *He applauds her reasonings.* Her serious questions, and his ludicrous answers.—He makes different proposals.—He offers

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XXXI. *Lovelace to Belford.* Glories in his contrivanc[e.] Gives an advantageous description of Clarissa's behaviou[r.] Exults on her mentioning London. None but *impude[nt] girls*, he says, should run away with a man. His furth[er] views, plots, and designs.

XXXII. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Humorously touches o[n] her reproofs in relation to Hickman. Observations o[n] *smooth* love. Lord M.'s family greatly admire her. A[p]proves of her spirited treatment of Lovelace, and of h[er] going to London. Hints at the narrowness of her own m[o]ther. Advises her to keep fair with Lovelace.

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XXXV. *Lovelace to Belford.* Explains what is meant [by] Doleman's answer about the lodgings. Makes Belfo[rd] object to his scheme, that he may answer the objectio[ns.] Exults. Swells. Despises every body. *Importance of t[he] minutiæ.* More of his arts, views, and contrivances.

XXXVI. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Acquaints her with [a] scheme formed by her brother and Captain Singleton [to] carry her off. *Hickman's silent charities.* She despises a[ll] *his sex as well as him.* Ill terms on which her own fath[er] and mother lived. *Extols Clarissa for her domestic go[od] qualities.* Particulars of a great contest with her moth[er] on their correspondence. Has been slapt by her. Obse[r]vations on managing wives.

XXXVII. XXXVIII. XXXIX. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* [A] strong remonstrance on her behaviour to her mother: [in] which she lays down the duty of children. Accuses [her] want of generosity to Hickman. Further excuses hers[elf] *on declining to accept of her money offers.* Proposes a co[n]dition on which Mrs. Howe may see all they write.

XL. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Her mother rejects the propos[ed] condition. Miss Howe takes thankfully her reprehensio[n] but *will* continue the correspondence. Some excuses f[or] herself. Humorous story of game chickens.

XLI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Lovelace communicates her brother's and Singleton's project, but treats it with seeming contempt. She asks his advice what to do upon it. This brings on an offer of marriage from him. How it went off.

XLII. *Lovelace to Belford.* He confesses his *artful intentions in the offer of marriage:* yet had like, he says, to have been caught in his own snares.

XLIII. *Joseph Leman to Mr. Lovelace.* With intelligence of a design formed against him by the Harlowes. Joseph's vile hypocrisy and selfishness.

XLIV. *Lovelace. In answer.* Story of Miss Betterton. Boasts of his treatment of his mistresses. The artful use he makes of Joseph's intelligence.

XLV. *Clarissa to her aunt Hervey.* Complains of her silence. Hints at her not having designed to go away with Lovelace. She will open her whole heart to her, if she will encourage her so to do, by the hopes of a reconciliation.

XLVI. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Observations on Lovelace's *meanness, pride,* and *revenge.* Politeness not to be expected from him. She raves at him for the artful manner in which he urges Clarissa to marry him. Advises her how to act in her present situation.

XLVII. *Belford to Lovelace.* Becomes a warm advocate to the lady. Gives many instructive reasons to enforce his arguments in her favour.

XLVIII. *Mrs. Hervey to Clarissa.* A severe and cruel letter in answer to hers, No. xlv. It was not designed, she says, absolutely to force her to marry to her dislike.

XLIX. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Her deep regret, on this intelligence, for having met Lovelace. The finer sensibilities make not happy. *Her fate too visibly in his power.* He is *unpolite, cruel, insolent, unwise, a trifler with his own happiness.* Her reasons why she less likes him than ever. *Her soul his soul's superior.* Her fortitude. Her prayer.

L. LI. *From the same.* Now indeed is her heart broken, she says. A solemn curse laid upon her by her father.—Her sister's barbarous letters on the occasion.

LII. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* A letter full of generous consolation and advice. Her friendly vow. Sends her fifty guineas in the leaves of a Norris's Miscellanies.

LIII. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* A faithful friend *the medicine of life.* She is just setting out for London. Lovelace has offered marriage to her in so unreserved a manner, that she *wishes she had never written with diffidence of him.* Is sorry it was not *in her power* to comply with his earnest solicitations. Returns her Norris: and why.

LIV. LV. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Sorry she has returned her Norris. Wishes she had accepted of Lovelace's unreserved offer of marriage. Believes herself to have a sneaking kindness for Hickman: and why. She blames Mrs. Harlowe: and why.

In answer to No. liv. Clarissa states the difference in the characters of Mr. Lovelace and Mr. Hickman; and tells her, that her motives for suspending marriage *were not merely ceremonious ones.* Regrets Mrs. Howe's forbidding the correspondence between them. Her dutiful apology for her own mother. *Lesson to children.*

LVI. *Lovelace to Belford.* Thinks he shall be inevitably manacled at last. The lady's extreme illness. Her *filial piety* gives her *dreadful faith* in a *father's curses.* She lets not Miss Howe know how very ill she was. His vows of marriage bring her back to life. *Absolutely in earnest in those vows.* [*The only time he was so.*] He can now talk of love and marriage without check. Descants upon Belford's letter, No. xlvii.

LVII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Is setting out for London. A struggle with his heart. Owns it to be a villain of a heart. A fit of strong, but transitory remorse. If he *do* marry, he doubts he shall have a vapourish wife. Thinks it would be better for both not to marry. His libertine reasons. *Lessons to the sex.*

LVIII. *From the same.* They arrive at Mrs. Sinclair's. Sally Martin and Polly Horton set upon him. He wavers in his good purposes. Dorcas Wykes proposed, and reluctantly accepted for a servant, till Hannah can come. Dorcas's character. He has two great points to carry: what they are.

LIX. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Likes her lodging; but not greatly the widow. Chides Miss Howe for her rash, though friendly vow. Catalogue of good books she finds in her closet. Utterly dissatisfied with him for giving out to the women below that they were privately married. Has a strong debate with him on this subject. He *offers matrimony* to her, but in such a manner, that she could not close with his offer. Her caution as to doors, windows, and seals of letters.

LX. *Miss Howe to Clarissa.* Her expedient to correspond with each other every day. Is glad she had thoughts of marrying him *had he repeated his offer.* Wonders he did not.

LXI. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Breakfasts with him and the widow, and her two nieces. Observations upon their behaviour and looks. He makes a merit of leaving her, and

hopes, ON HIS RETURN, that she will name his happy day. She is willing to make the best constructions in his favour.

In his next letter (*extracts from which are only given*) he triumphs on the points he has carried. Stimulated by the women, he resumes his resolution to try her to the utmost.

LXII. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* Lovelace returns the next day. She thinks herself meanly treated, and is angry. *He again urges marriage*; but before she can return an answer makes another proposal: *yet she suspects not that he means a studied delay.* He is in treaty for Mrs. Fretchville's house. Description of it. An inviting opportunity offers for him to propose matrimony to her. *She wonders he let it slip.* He is very urgent for her company at a collation he is to give to four of his select friends, and Miss Partington. He gives an account who Miss Partington is.

In Mr. Lovelace's next letter he invites Belford, Mowbray, Belton, and Tourville to his collation. His humorous instructions for their behaviour before the lady. Has two views in getting her into their company.

LXIII. *Lovelace to Belford.* Has been at church with Clarissa. The Sabbath a charming institution. The text startles him. Nathan the prophet he calls a good ingenious fellow. She likes the women better than she did at first. She reluctantly consents to honour his collation with her presence. Longs to have their opinions of his fair prize. Describes her to great advantage.

LXIV. *Clarissa to Miss Howe.* She praises his good behaviour at St. Paul's. Is prevailed on to dine with Mrs. Sinclair and her nieces. Is better pleased with them than she thought she should be. Blames herself for her readiness to censure, where reputation is concerned. Her charitable allowances on this head. This day an agreeable day. *Interprets every thing she can fairly interpret in Mr. Lovelace's favour.* She *could prefer him to all the men she ever knew, if he would always be what he had been that day.* Is determined, however, to be governed in her affections, as much as possible, by true merit, and by deeds. Dates again, and is offended at Miss Partington's being introduced to her, and at his making her yield to be present at his intended collation.

LXV. *From the same.* Disgusted with her evening. Characterizes his four companions. Likes not Miss Partington's behaviour.

LXVI. *From the same.* An attempt to induce her to admit Miss Partington to a share in her bed for that night. She refuses. Her reasons. Is highly dissatisfied.

LXVII. *From the same.* Has received an angry letter from Mrs. Howe, forbidding her to correspond with her daughter. She advises compliance though against herself; and, to induce her to it, makes the best of her present prospects.

LXVIII. *Miss Howe. In answer.* Flames out upon this step of her mother. Insists upon continuing the correspondence. Her menaces if Clarissa write not. Raves against Lovelace. But blames her for not obliging Miss Partington. And why. Advises her to think of settlements. Likes Lovelace's proposal of Mrs. Fretchville's house.

LXIX. *Clarissa. In reply.* Terrified at her menaces, she promises to continue writing. Beseeches her to learn to subdue her passions. Has just received her clothes.

LXX. *Mr. Hickman to Clarissa.* Miss Howe, he tells her, is uneasy for the vexation she has given her. If she will write on as before, Miss Howe will not think of doing what she is so apprehensive of. He offers her his most faithful services.

END OF VOL. III.

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